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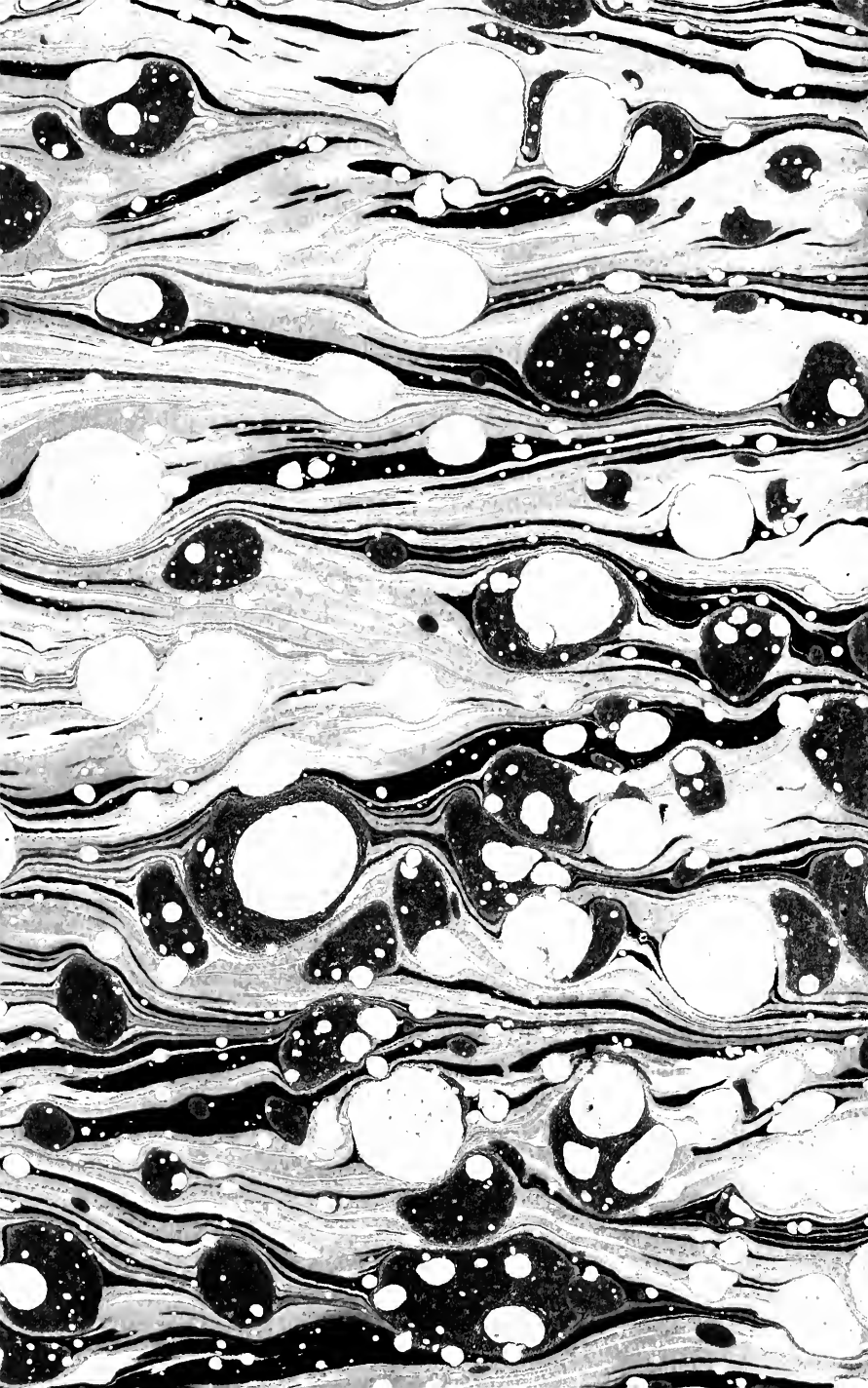


THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY









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# LECTURES

EXPLANATORY OF

THE DIATESSARON.



# LECTURES

EXPLANATORY OF

THE DIATESSARON,

OR

THE HISTORY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST,

COLLECTED FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS,

IN THE FORM OF A CONTINUOUS NARRATIVE.

BY

JOHN DAVID ✓ MACBRIDE, D.C.L.

PRINCIPAL OF MAGDALENE HALL.

Sint castæ deliciæ meæ Scripturæ tuæ; nec fallar in eis, nec fallam ex eis.

*Augustini Confess. xi. 2.*

THIRD EDITION, ENLARGED.

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TO THE  
REVEREND WILLIAM JACOBSON, M.A.  
PUBLIC ORATOR OF THE UNIVERSITY,  
VICE-PRINCIPAL OF MAGDALENE HALL, AND THE QUEEN'S  
PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY.

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DEAR JACOBSON,

“Lectures explanatory of the Diatessaron” can be dedicated to no person with so much propriety as to a Professor of Divinity; and I gladly avail myself of the opportunity which the publication of this Work affords me, of connecting my name with yours, and of expressing my obligations to you as a Friend, and as the diligent and able Instructor, for many years, in Theology as well as in Classical Literature, of the Undergraduates of Magdalene Hall. It hath now pleased the All-wise Disposer of events unexpectedly to sever our connection, by calling you to a larger and more conspicuous field of usefulness, the communicating Religious Knowledge to all who are trained in Oxford to be the future Clergy of England. I am thankful that the nature of your office requires your residence within the University, and therefore, though the Academic tie that united

us be broken, there can be no impediment in the way of continuing our friendship. Looking back to the Divines who have preceded you in this Chair, I dwell for a moment on the still honoured names of Prideaux and Conant, because they were Rectors of one of the Colleges of which you have been a dependent Member; and of Sanderson, the great ornament of the other, whose works are to issue from our Press under your superintendence. The Sermons of this eminent Casuist will, from his profound and well-weighed observations, repay a careful perusal; while his Professorial publications, as well as his predecessor's "Lectiones" and "Orationes" on the creation of Doctors at the Act, give us some notion of the Divinity Exercises of their day. All of these, which, with the exception of those required by Statute from Candidates for the Bachelor's Degree, have been abrogated, had long before their abolition ceased to excite any interest; and the Professor has been more usefully employed, though the office be less dignified, since he undertook to direct Students to the best sources of information, than when he authoritatively determined controverted questions. Oxford is deeply indebted to the lamented Bishop Lloyd, for adding to his Public Course of instruction, Lectures to a more select audience on the New Testament, and the History of the Church. His plans were carried on, as long as his life was spared, by our excellent mutual Friend Dr. Burton; and these more private Lectures have been continued for



a much longer period of time by your immediate Predecessor, whose teaching has been highly approved by many, and censured, I believe, by none. Their plans, or any other schemes for diffusing sound and scriptural Religious Knowledge which may recommend themselves to your judgment, I am confident you will pursue with zeal and discretion. When our reformed University substituted, as the subjects of the Lectures of Bachelors in Divinity, the Epistles of St. Paul for the Sentences of Peter Lombard, and assumed for her arms the Bible opened at the twenty-seventh Psalm, the *Lord is my Light*, she declared with our Church, that the Word of God was her sole Rule of Faith. Henceforward it will be your privilege to make that Word your chief study, and to bring all your stores of secular learning to illustrate the unsearchable riches of Christ contained in that heavenly treasury. It wants but one year of three centuries since Peter Martyr was placed in Oxford by Cranmer to explain and vindicate and complete the Reformation then partially effected. According to his friend Jewel, he is a man never to be mentioned without the highest respect and honour, and he is praised as an Author by the candid Roman Catholic Dupin. Placed, as you now are, by God's Providence in the same Divinity Chair, at a period when the blessed Truths then revived have been lowered by some, and even denied by others, who continued Teachers in our Church, you require the *spirit of power and*

*of love, and of a sound mind*, to fulfil the duties of your office.

It is my hope and earnest prayer, that you will be enabled so *rightly to divide the word of Truth*, that all who attend your Lectures may receive the love of it ; and that those of them who shall be ordained to be “faithful dispensers of the Word of God, and of His holy Sacraments,” may take “their doctrine and exhortation out of the Holy Scriptures,” neither seeking through the traditions of men *to be wise above what is written*, nor with the Neologian to accommodate it to their own prepossessions ; but so to handle it, as to save both themselves, and those that shall be committed to their care.

With a sincere wish for your usefulness, and consequently your happiness, I subscribe myself,

Your sincere and affectionate Friend,

JOHN DAVID MACBRIDE.

# PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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THESE Lectures being designed for Students, who have neither leisure nor opportunity to consult many Commentaries, the Author has selected from some of them, and from other works, such observations as he conceives will facilitate their understanding the Diatessaron, that is, a continuous narrative of our Saviour's life in the words of the four Evangelists. He has not scrupled to adopt the remarks of others, and, when it suited his purpose, their expressions; but he feels it to be his duty to make this acknowledgment of his obligations. Scott's Commentary, which also embodies much of what is valuable in Hammond, Whitby, and other standard expositors, and Mac-knight's Harmony, may be regarded as the basis of this work; and the Compiler is greatly indebted to Dr. Hales's New Analysis of Chronology, and to Blomfield's Critical Digest, from which he has derived much information which he might not otherwise have obtained. Other works, both ancient and modern, have been examined, but they are generally expressly cited. The remarks, it will be observed, are more frequently explanatory than devotional; but the Compiler trusts, that he shall not therefore be supposed to undervalue the latter; for he firmly believes, that the Holy Scriptures were not written, like the compositions of uninspired men, to gratify curiosity by

the communication of knowledge, but to make the reader *wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*; and he is persuaded, that they have been justly characterised by the Apostle, (2 Tim. iii. 16.) as *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*. Still he has considered, that the text must be accurately understood before it can be judiciously applied; and he has introduced no moral and spiritual improvements of it which would have enlarged the volume, without increasing in proportion its value, since he does not aspire to equal in excellence, or usefulness, those contained in the many edifying works in which our language happily abounds. He would refer the Student, who seeks through their assistance to be *built up in our most holy faith*, (Jude 20.) to works which have been long familiar to the devout believer, and which will not disappoint him; to Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*, Matthew Henry's *Bible*, and Doddridge's *Family Expositor*; and he would add, that a valuable accession has been made lately to this department of Christian literature, by the present Bishop of Chester<sup>a</sup>, in his *Exposition of the Gospels*, and by the Rev. Charles Girdlestone, in his *Commentary on the New Testament*, which are intended, and particularly adapted, for family worship.

<sup>a</sup> I have the gratification of stating, (though probably few who will read this work require such information,) that the Prelate designated in the text as Bishop of Chester, is now Archbishop of Canterbury, and Primate of all England.

*Oxford, July 27, 1835.*

## PREFACE

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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THESE “LECTURES” being out of print, I have been induced to publish a new Edition, in the hope that it may prove useful to persons who have neither the means to purchase, nor leisure to study, the Expositions of our numerous approved Commentators. The Work, which is considerably enlarged, has been carefully revised: indeed scarcely a page remains unaltered; but the variations from the last Edition are mostly verbal, and the additional remarks are chiefly introduced for the purpose of rendering more clear to the Reader some of our Lord’s Discourses, which I thought might otherwise appear obscure to those who had not at the time the sacred Text before them. In doctrine no alteration will be found; for increasing study of God’s Word has only confirmed the conviction I had happily long previously entertained, that our Reformers had had *the eyes of their understanding enlightened*, to comprehend that Record of unerring Truth, and to extract out of it, and embody in the “Articles” which they drew up “for the establishing Consent touching true

Religion," not only those grand verities concerning the Deity, of which there has been no doubt in the Church since the fourth General Council, but also those respecting the fall of Man, and his restoration from sin and misery to holiness and happiness, which have been contested between Romanists and Protestants. These doctrines of Grace, as they have been emphatically called, so odious to the carnal mind, had been not only neutralised, but actually perverted, by Tradition; till it pleased God, after centuries of religious darkness, to raise up in Germany in an Augustinian Monk an intrepid Preacher of "Justification by Faith only," and of all the blessed consequences of that "most wholesome doctrine so very full of comfort." The *Sun of Righteousness* soon arose *with healing in His wings* upon England, and Cranmer, Latymer, and Ridley, with a few faithful associates, purified from Romish superstition, and guarded from sectarian innovation, our branch of the Catholic Church, which they soon after consecrated and consolidated by martyrdom. The discussion of controverted points is foreign to the design of this Work; but as our opponents *wrest* passages in the Gospels, as they do in other parts of Holy Scripture, from their obvious meaning to support pernicious errors; such as the merit of good works; works of Supererogation; Transubstantiation; the Sacrifice of the Mass for the benefit of the living and the dead; the worship of Saints; the exaltation of the Virgin Mother of



our Lord to be Queen of Heaven, and the Bishop of Rome's right to govern as a *Lord the heritage*; I have felt myself bound to argue occasionally against Roman Catholic interpretations; but I have never brought against them *a railing accusation*, or ascribed to them tenets not sanctioned in the Decrees of their own Councils, or in the Creed of Pope Pius.

Illustrations of customs, or a statement of the precise meaning of important words, have been sometimes introduced, not to draw off the mind to points of minute criticism, but in order to ascertain the meaning of the Text, that fully developed, it might, under God's grace, enlighten the understanding and renovate the heart. To use the expressive words of a justly-valued Friend<sup>a</sup>, under whose judicious and candid Exegesis, Holy Scripture will prove, I trust, *a lantern to the feet, and a light unto the paths*, of a succession of numerous hearers of his Lectures, I have endeavoured "to keep ever in mind the relative importance of the several subjects of consideration, and to observe the great leading objects of Revelation apart from the distorting views of controversy;" and so I hope I have avoided "the danger of losing the Theologian in the Antiquary, or possibly the Christian in the Theologian." The essential Truths of Christianity, as collected out of the Bible, and arranged in Pro-

<sup>a</sup> Inaugural Lecture by the Provost of Oriel, Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture, p. 26.

positions in Catechisms and Bodies of Divinity, command our assent ; yet as Propositions they are too apt to remain cold and lifeless dogmas, which make little impression upon the heart. We have consequently abundant reason to thank God that His *diversified wisdom* has recorded them for our acceptance, in *divers manners*, especially as incentives to gratitude and motives to actions, and illustrated them by the practice of His Saints ; but above all, by that of *His dear Son*. The Bible, consisting as it does in so large a proportion of the history of nations and individuals, is “Philosophy,” or rather Religion, “teaching by example ;” and the portion of it which it is the object of these LECTURES to explain, brings preeminently before us Him who *is the Way, the Truth, and the Life* ; and not only is He exhibited to us abstractedly as an object of Faith, but He is delineated, for our instruction, as a Man “like unto us in all things, sin only except.” If a heathen Philosopher, enamoured of Wisdom, could exclaim, that in a visible form she must excite marvellous love, surely when Virtue, at once more sublime and more tender than Plato or Aristotle or Zeno could even conceive, descended upon our earth in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, it ought to have been irresistibly attractive. It is our privilege to have this Image preserved in the Gospels ; and we are invited to deduce practical lessons of piety, holiness, and morality, from this only perfect human Being. We reflect with delight upon the memory of

Patriots who have died for their country, even though that country be not our own; and still more highly do we appreciate the Philanthropic Few, whose ardour to do good has not been restricted within narrower limits than those of the world; but in this survey we follow step by step the Babe of Bethlehem from the cradle to the tomb, and even beyond the tomb to the mount of Olives; and learn to admire, venerate, and love this best Friend of the whole human race; who, knowing beforehand the decreed termination of His life of privation and self-denial, nevertheless, “for us men and for our salvation, came down from Heaven.” Dwelling *from the beginning, before ever the earth was*, in unapproachable light with *the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords, His delight was with the sons of men*; and consequently He condescended to partake of *flesh and blood*, so that He was *not ashamed*, even after His glorious Resurrection, *to call them brethren*. Gratitude for unmerited salvation draws us by the *bonds of love* to this our incarnate God, who *loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood*. *The heavens must receive our Benefactor in time and in eternity, until the time of the restitution of all things*; but though as yet we *see Him not*, even now feeling our unutterable obligations to Him, we *rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory*.

Freed from *the spirit of bondage, and crying, Abba Father*, the Christian finds that his Master's yoke is, as He promised, *easy, and His burthen light*; and

having his *heart set at liberty* by the Holy Spirit, looking off from the great cloud of witnesses and companions of his *race, to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the Faith*, he will run with cheerful alacrity in the *ways of God's commandments*, that *he may finish his course with joy. Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength*, was, we know from the highest authority, *the first and great commandment* under the Mosaic Dispensation; and this supreme affection the same Jehovah, when *manifested in the flesh*, required from all His disciples. At the same time He preserves them from the anxious perplexity into which they might be thrown, by the attempt to ascertain the strength or sincerity of their feelings, by supplying them with an invariable and certain standard by which to test their affection. *He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me*; and for the comfort and reward of these, He hath been graciously pleased to add, *and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.*

*Oxford, Lent Term, 1848.*

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## INTRODUCTORY DISSERTATION.

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### SECTION I.

*On the number, origin, authors, and qualities, of the Gospels.*

ST. PAUL, in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, (iii. 6, 14.) contrasting the Christian with the Mosaic dispensation, calls it the new *Diatheké*; and the term which ought to have been rendered *Covenant*, has been transferred from the Covenant itself, to the writings in which it is contained. Origen, (in his Commentary on St. John, and the preface to his *Περί Ἀρχῶν*, I. iv. 1.) who wrote early in the third century, is the first, whose works remain to us, who uses it in this sense; but the Apostle's language, and especially the expression, *Reading the old Covenant*, so naturally lead to it, that it was probably employed as soon as it was found convenient to distinguish the Christian from the Jewish Scriptures. In the Latin version, *Diatheké* was translated not *Fœdus* but *Testamentum*<sup>a</sup>, and consequently the volume of the Christian Scriptures has been always entitled throughout the Western Church, except by a few modern critics, the *New Testament*. This is to be regretted, though custom has reconciled us to it, since it confuses our conception by the introduction of a new idea, which I conceive was never intended. The term

<sup>a</sup> *Testamentum* in popular language was equivalent to *fœdus*, a *pactum*, as appears from the Italic version in which the covenant made with Noah is rendered *Testamentum*; so that the idea introduced into our version, might not have been intended by the translator of the Vulgate.

*New Testament* reminds us of the Old, and we perceive immediately that it is wholly inapplicable to the Mosaic covenant, in which no contracting party died; and though the Christian may be so called, since its benefits are procured through the death of Him who contracted for our sake, even with respect to that the term is objectionable, because it draws off the thoughts from the doctrine on which our Saviour designed to fix them, when, instituting the Eucharist, He said, *This is my blood of the new Covenant*, speaking of Himself not as of a man ratifying a will, but as of a victim ratifying a covenant by sacrifice. His words suggest a comparison of the covenant made through Moses with the Israelites, with the better one of which He is the Mediator, established for *the many*, that is, all mankind, upon better promises, that *by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first covenant, they which were called might receive the promise* (not of the earthly Canaan, but) *of an eternal inheritance.* (Heb. ix. 15.) The comparison is followed out in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the efficacy of the Redeemer's blood, which has purchased eternal redemption, is contrasted with the worthlessness of that of bulls and goats, which can only sanctify to the purifying of the flesh, and required to be annually repeated, while He, by one sacrifice of Himself once offered, has perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Throughout the comparison, a covenant is no doubt the principal object; but commentators generally suppose that the Apostle, availing himself of the ambiguity of the word, adds that of a will, when he continues, *where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator, for a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.* At first reading, the statement seems to be true, but it depends entirely upon this passage; and as this can be translated more in conformity with the

context, I am satisfied that upon a full consideration, the reader will agree me, that Faber<sup>b</sup> has proved that throughout *Diatheké* is used only in the sense of covenant, and that this limitation of the Apostle's reasoning renders it more perspicuous. The same view had been taken before by Whitby, Doddridge, and Macknight.

The volume consists of twenty-seven independent works, by eight authors, arranged in three parts, Historical, Doctrinal, and Prophetic. The first exhibits the history of our Lord and Saviour, and of the rise and early progress of his Church. The second contains Epistles of five of his Apostles to different branches of that Church, to individuals, and to believers in general. And the third, a Prophecy revealed to his beloved and last surviving Apostle, which under mysterious figures represents the sufferings and persecutions of his people, and affords, even to those least able to penetrate their meaning, the assurance of the final triumph and universal prevalence of his religion. Our present enquiry, with the exception of a few remarks upon the text and version of the volume, is limited to the first four books, to which the significant title of *Gospel* has been long restricted.

The Apostle, says Theodoret, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, calls his preaching Εὐαγγέλιον, *Evangeliūm*, that is, a Good Message, because it announces the reconciliation of God to man, the overthrow of Satan, the remission of sins, the abolition of death, the resurrection of the dead,

<sup>b</sup> In his interesting work on the three Dispensations, (vol. ii. p. 330.) "For where there is a covenant, there also it is necessary that the death of the ratifier should be for a covenant over dead *victims*, is valid, since it is of no strength while the ratifier is living." A version substantially the same is given by Wakefield and Scholefield. The whole argument is much obscured in our authorized version by the arbitrary interchange of the two words, for the one of the original and the Vulgate. Having first used Covenant, our translators introduce Testament, and again return to Covenant. The reader ignorant of Greek would hardly imagine that "Mediator of the new covenant," (xii. 24.) and "Mediator of the New Testament," (x. 15.) are renderings of the same original.

eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven; and certainly the term is applied with peculiar propriety to the happiest intelligence that ever reached, or can reach, the fallen posterity of Adam. We have substituted for it an equivalent Anglo-Saxon compound, Gospel, that is, good word, though it may be also rendered God's word, as God is so called, because pre-eminently good; but it has been introduced into all other languages, even into those of the same Gothic origin as our own. Like Covenant, it was transferred in time from the good news itself, to those portions of the sacred volume which more especially contained it, that is, to the narratives of the ministry, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, who was not merely, like the Apostles, sent to proclaim the blessing of redemption, but was the author of it; and the writers of them received in time the title of Evangelists, which originally meant the preachers of the Gospel. This secondary sense does not occur in the Scriptures; and modern critics are agreed that there is no reason to think, that when St. Paul mentions the brother whose praise is in the Gospel, (2 Cor. viii. 18.) he refers, as was formerly supposed<sup>c</sup>, to the written Gospel of St. Luke.

The number of these narratives are four; and they have been uniformly attributed, by the uninterrupted tradition of the Church, to Matthew and John, Apostles, and to Mark and Luke, the companions of the Apostles Peter and Paul. These four, and these only, we learn from Eusebius, and other ecclesiastical writers, have been universally acknowledged. We know from St. Luke's preface, that before he wrote, many had *taken in hand to set forth in order a*

<sup>c</sup> In this, and several other passages, translators, by retaining what has become a technical term, obscure the meaning. The substitution of the good news of peace, Eph. vi. 15. of salvation, i. 13. and of the grace of God, Acts xx. 24. for Gospel of peace, &c. would render them more perspicuous.



*declaration of the things which are most surely believed* among Christians; on which Origen observes, that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, being full of the Holy Ghost, did not take in hand to write, but wrote Gospels, intimating, that the word he uses ἐπεχειρήσαν conveys censure. This I cannot think the Evangelist intended, for he refers to no mistakes or inaccuracies; and the expression, “It seemed good to me *also*,” appears to put them on the same level with himself. If he had said some instead of many, I should have concluded that he meant only Matthew and Mark, (as indeed Dr. Hales supposes,) for he describes them as eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word. If he referred to their Gospels, they must have perished, for we have reason to think that the spurious ones still extant were forgeries of a later age, and if they had been written before his, he could not have mentioned them without condemning them. As, however, many others were formerly extant, and as they passed under the name of Apostles or their associates, modern infidels have insidiously availed themselves of them, for the purpose of undermining the credit of the genuine ones; and a suspicion may accordingly be excited in the minds of those who know them only by name, that their rejection, and the admission of the Four into the Canon of Scripture, was an arbitrary choice. A few in whole or in part have come down to us, but the most cursory inspection of them will satisfy any candid person, that it would be absurd to consider such gospels as the rule of Faith; and the remark may be extended to all the spurious Acts, Epistles, and Revelations. It would indeed be strange, if there had been any to advocate their pretensions to authority among the early Christians, except such as hoped to shelter under the names of our Lord’s immediate followers their own peculiar notions, for they abound in frivolous and absurd details, and useless and even objectionable miracles;

they support doctrines, as the sanctity of relics, an extravagant and unjustifiable reverence for the Virgin Mary, and other doctrines which originated in a subsequent age; they contain studied imitations of passages in the genuine Scriptures; their statements are occasionally at variance with the known character and principles of their reputed authors<sup>d</sup>; and they sometimes mention events later than their assumed date, and contradict authentic history. They apparently originated from the desire of supporting erroneous opinions, and gratifying an idle curiosity, which wishes to know more of our Lord's private life than it has pleased the Holy Spirit to reveal. They convey indeed their own confutation; and external evidence is no less unfavourable to them, for they are denounced by the Fathers as heretical, and some, as Irenæus, (iii. 1.) argue in favour of the authenticity of those which we receive, that there could not be more than four, from several fanciful analogies, as of the number of elements, the points of the wind, and of the living beings seen by Ezekiel and St. John. The latter is remarkable, because it has occasioned the application to the Evangelists of their symbols, the man, the lion, the bull, and the eagle. Such comparisons will have no weight in the present age as *arguments*; but they are valuable as evidence to the *fact* of the whole Church under heaven having received only four Gospels without dispute, as we are assured by Origen, and by the still more important testimony of Irenæus, which, coming from one who derived his information from Polycarp the disciple of St. John, ought to be held decisive. We may therefore dismiss the consideration of the apocryphal

<sup>d</sup> The few apocryphal works extant have been published, with notices of those that have perished, by Fabricius, in his *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*. And the greater part has been translated by Jones, in his "New and full Method of settling the canonical Authority of the New Testament," with references to the Fathers by whom they were first mentioned.

gospels, with the remark, that they undesignedly serve the cause of Christianity; for not only do their puerilities and absurdities, as contrasted with the contents of the Four, satisfy us of the genuineness of the latter, which would have resembled them in their defects, if like them they had been forgeries, but they also confirm the truth of the authentic Scriptures, being written in the name of the Apostles or their companions, and asserting like them the divinity of our Lord, and his power both of working miracles himself, and of conferring that power on others. Their accounts do not contradict the canonical Gospels, they are only unauthorized additions. The same principal facts are stated, the leading agents are the same; it follows therefore, that at the time of their composition the history of our Lord was too well known to be materially altered, and that the orthodox faith was already firmly established. Such works as far as they were received promoted superstition, but they can render no service to infidelity. They were not designed to supersede the Four, but to enlarge their number, yet so unskilful is the imitation, that their contents must betray to a pious reader, however unlearned, their human origin, as the miracles which they ascribe to the holy child Jesus, for they are confined to his youth, and unconnected with his ministry, are at best capricious tricks, and too often acts of a revolting character. It is well observed in a recent work, that, with a very few partial exceptions, the apocryphal gospels are a barren and dreary waste of wonders without object or aim, and only instructive as making us strongly to feel, more strongly than but for these examples we might have done, how needful it is that there should be other factors besides power for producing a true miracle, that wisdom and love must be there also, that where men conceive of power as its chiefest element, they give us only an hateful mockery of the divine<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> Trench's Notes on the Miracles, p. 42.

There is also a general consent of antiquity to the order in which the Gospels were written, for with the single exception of a passage quoted by Eusebius (vi. 13.) from a lost work of Clement of Alexandria, it is either affirmed or implied by all the Fathers. I shall be content with citing the memorable passage from Irenæus, (iii. 1.) the earliest in which all four are mentioned. "Now Matthew among the Hebrews published a written Gospel in their own language, while Peter and Paul were preaching and founding the Church of Rome. After their departure, (*exodus*, meaning probably out of life,) Mark himself, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also delivered to us in writing what had been preached by Peter; and Luke, the follower of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John the disciple of the Lord, who had leaned upon his bosom, himself also residing at Ephesus, set forth a Gospel." This order we may view as confirmed by their present arrangement, the only deviation from which is in the Mss. of the Italic version, and in one Greek Ms. (Codex Bezaë) which is accompanied by that version. This order is evidently designed as chronological, since if not, we may presume that precedence would be given to that of the beloved disciple over those of Mark and Luke, and we know that his is the last in point of time. Luke's preface has been cited to show that his was the first canonical Gospel; but it proves no more at most, than that those of Matthew and Mark were not known to him; and we have no reason to infer that if he had been acquainted with them, he would have mentioned them, for the supplemental character of St. John's Gospel is universally allowed, yet he does not name those of his predecessors, though he had evidently read them; consequently no argument can be urged against Luke's knowledge of the other two from his silence. Griesbach is thought by some critics to have proved from internal

evidence, that, contrary to the general notion, Luke wrote before Mark ; but the only ancient authority he can bring to support his opinion is Clement of Alexandria. And such reasoning is very fallacious, for Mill maintains the opposite opinion, which Townson and Greswell have substantiated by the examination of their respective texts to the satisfaction of others. The relative dates of the Gospels of the two Apostles are generally allowed, and Hug seems to me to prove the priority of Mark to Luke ; for the Gospel of the latter, he says, is distinguished by a number of events untouched by Matthew, in only two of which does Mark coincide. Now supposing Luke to have written before Mark, it seems incredible that Mark should take his incidents almost exclusively from Matthew.

The order then in which the Evangelists wrote may be regarded as settled, but the dates and places of their publication have always been subjects of discussion, and we have not now the means of deciding those questions. We may however venture to affirm, that the first three were composed before the destruction of Jerusalem. We may easily believe with Eusebius, that while the Apostles were preaching in Judæa to those who were acquainted with the leading facts of the Gospel history, they would not think of committing them to writing ; but when they are about to disperse, it was natural for them to draw up an account as a substitute for their oral instruction ; and it is not an improbable conjecture, that Matthew undertook the office with the approbation of the rest. Some fix as early a period for his writing his Gospel as eight years after the Ascension, while others date it as late as thirty, about the time that is generally assigned to those of Mark and Luke. After an examination of what has been written by Lardner, Jones, Townson, and others, I am disposed to think, that we may assume as established as well as the nature of the case admits, that St. Matthew

wrote early in Judæa, before the dispersion of the Apostles, for the use of the original converts ; that St. Mark's Gospel was revised, or even dictated, by St. Peter, for a mixed society of Jewish and Gentile converts in Italy ; that St. Luke published his in Achaia, with a peculiar view to the establishment in the faith of Gentile converts, and especially of one of high rank ; and that long after, St. John, who was the last surviving Apostle, and the only person who could then do it with authority, at the request of the Bishops of the lesser Asia, wrote his, both to supply their omissions, and to counteract the Gnostic heresy concerning the nature of the Saviour, which was then spreading. It is allowed by all, that he had read the three others, and designed his own as a supplement, saying that there was only wanting an account of what was done by Christ in the early part of his ministry. "He observed," says Clement of Alexandria, "that those things which concern the humanity of Christ had been related by them, and being persuaded by his friends, and also moved by the Spirit of God, he wrote a spiritual Gospel." In the judgment of this inspired author, a sufficient account had been recorded of what Jesus had taught and done and suffered, to satisfy the reader that *He was the Christ the Son of God, and that believers might have life through his name* ; and this judgment is the best answer to the question, why the Church receives neither more nor fewer Gospels than four. He is at the same time careful to remark, that Jesus wrought many more miracles than are recorded, and that we have only a small selection of his actions: it was important to keep the narratives within a moderate compass ; and we cannot doubt, that the overruling Spirit of God influenced all the Evangelists to select such facts and discourses, as were best adapted for the conviction and edification of their readers in every age. It may appear extraordinary, that instead of one complete account of our

Lord's ministry, we are left to collect it for ourselves out of these four Gospels; but as He, while on earth, revealed the scheme of salvation by degrees, so there was no doubt a fitness in the progressive development in writing of his own history; and certainly the attention it requires to compare the particulars in which the Evangelists agree or differ has a tendency to impress them more strongly on the memory. "How then," asks Chrysostom, in his commentary on Matthew, "was not one Evangelist sufficient? No doubt one might have sufficed; but as there are four such authors, who did not write at one and the same time, nor in the same place, who did not act in concert, and nevertheless speak as it were out of one mouth, hence arises a stronger proof of their credibility. It is objected, that many passages convict them of dissimilarity. Our answer is, that if they agreed minutely in all things, their opponents would never have believed that they had not written by agreement; but now the apparent contradiction in minor matters frees them from such a suspicion." If their narratives had no variations, they would have been equivalent to no more than one; but now our belief is confirmed in facts, which rest upon the testimony of four independent witnesses; for though we should allow with the German critics, that the first three had access to some common documents, which form the basis of their works, or with some ancient and many modern writers, that each succeeding Evangelist derived much matter from those preceding him; still even in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, which most closely resemble each other, there is a sufficient variation in the addition or omission of particulars, to show that neither was a servile copyist, who did not exercise his own judgment.

It is satisfactory to observe, in how great a degree the Gospels authenticate themselves. Taking from ancient and credible authors the fact, that they were written by the Evangelists, we shall find them answer so completely to the

idea of what we might respectively expect from them, that we cannot doubt that we have them as they were originally published. In St. Matthew's, we find marks that he wrote in Judæa and for Jews ; and in others, that they wrote chiefly for Gentile converts, in countries in which the Jews and their customs were but imperfectly known. Three bear tokens of being written or approved by Apostles ; but in that of Luke we distinguish the character of one, who, though fully acquainted with his subject, was not an eye-witness, or an Apostle ; for he treats their failings with more tenderness than they themselves do, and calls them by this name of pre-eminence, which they themselves do not assume ; and when he makes mention of Christ as from Himself, he substitutes the title of Lord, which Matthew never uses, John seldom, and Mark only once.

An attentive reader cannot fail to be struck with the great similarity of the first three Gospels ; for he finds, that, with some variation of minute particulars, they generally relate the same events, and report the same speeches ; and this is the more surprising, when we recall to mind the strong expression of St. John, that if all that Jesus did was recorded, the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. At first sight we might expect more variety, and though the course of events must have been in all the same, each might without enlarging his work have given us different miracles and different discourses. We must consider, on the other hand, that the repetition of the same with variations, renders them more credible, and therefore their method is really the best. We must also consider, that their object is an exhibition of our Lord's ministry, not a biography. Two therefore of the Evangelists begin at once with his baptism, and the other two, though they give an account of his birth and infancy, pass on at once to his public life, so that the whole intervening period, with the exception of his visit to



the Temple, is a blank ; we only knowing that He was subject to Joseph and Mary, and grew in favour with God and man.

This similarity is the more remarkable, because it is not only in matter but in words ; and when we examine the original, we find, sometimes in two and sometimes in all three, again and again, a perfect identity. It is still, I believe, the common opinion, and has been supported by divines of eminence, ancient and modern, that three writers, recording in the same language the same events, might fall repeatedly into the same expressions, without any knowledge of each other's work. Le Clerc and Lardner maintain it ; and even after Bishop Marsh's elaborate investigation of this phenomenon, and most ingenious attempt to explain it, Bishop Randolph observes, that, " with respect to our Lord's discourses, it should be recollected, that the sacred historians are anxious to report with accuracy, and in such a case even ordinary historians would endeavour to preserve the same words. In seeking to do this, it is not to be wondered at, that two or three writers should often fall upon verbal agreement ; nor, on the contrary, if they write independently, that they should often miss of it ; because their memory would sometimes fail them. It is natural to suppose the Evangelists studious of this very circumstance ; and we have also reason to think, that they had assistance from above ; and yet it is not necessary to suppose, that either their natural faculty, or the extraordinary assistance vouchsafed them, or both, should have brought them to a perfect identity throughout ; because it was not necessary for the purposes of Providence, and because it would have affected their character of original independent witnesses. Let me add, that these discourses, before they were committed to writing, must have been often repeated amongst the Apostles in teaching others, and in calling them to remembrance among themselves. Matthew

had probably often heard and known how his fellow-labourers recollected the same discourses which he had selected for his own preaching and writing; and we know not how much intercourse they had with each other, but probably much before they finally dispersed themselves. Mark and Luke, though not eye-witnesses, would have in a degree the same opportunities. I admit then of a common document, but that document was no other than the preaching of our blessed Lord Himself. In looking up to Him, the Author of their faith and mission, and to the very words in which He was wont to dictate to them, (which not only yet sounded in their ears, but were also recalled by the aid of his Holy Spirit, promised for that very purpose,) they have given us three Gospels, often agreeing in words, (though not without much diversification,) and always in sense." The Bishop has forgotten, that though our Saviour's discourses are *recorded* in Greek, they were *spoken* in another language, and this greatly weakens his argument. But without dwelling upon this oversight, I am convinced, that no one will think his hypothesis tenable, who will make the experiment suggested by Bishop Marsh, of translating a page from any language, and of comparing his own version with those of others. The differences he will find will satisfy him, that three texts so closely allied, could not have been formed independently of each other; and the difficulty would be still greater in an original composition. The argument is strengthened, if we find these three authors not only making choice of the same common words, but employing such as are unusual, and which do not occur in other parts of their own writings. Two and sometimes three use the same expressions for several verses together, they then differ, and again return to the same.

Now there appear to be only two modes of explaining this extraordinary coincidence of words and phrases. One,

that the Evangelists copied from one another, which appears to have been first suggested by Augustine; the other, the invention of modern German Theologians, that each Evangelist was unacquainted with the Gospels of the other two, but compiled from some earlier notes, which had been taken of the acts and discourses of our Lord. This idea first occurred to Le Clerc; but lay dormant upwards of sixty years, when it was revived by the German critics, but excited little attention in our country, till the publication of Bishop Marsh's dissertation on the origin of the first three Gospels, appended to his translation of Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament.

Eichhorn, by a very ingenious analysis, has investigated the contents of this supposed document, both in its original state, and with the various additions made to it in the copies which he assumes to have been used by the different Evangelists. His narrative is divided into forty-two sections, containing the facts common to all. And throughout these, Mark and Luke have precisely the same order; but Matthew, though he agrees with them from the nineteenth section to the end, that is, from the feeding the five thousand, differs in the former part. This document (as will appear to any one who will pick it out of any one of the three, by omitting the additional and peculiar matter) contains a short but well-connected representation of leading transactions; they are such as might be expected in a first sketch of our Saviour's ministry; and it is very remarkable that Lardner observed, in his history of the Evangelists, that if all the sections common to the three were separated from the other matter in their Gospels, they would contain a history of Christ: he then enumerates the principal materials, and concludes with saying, "Here are all the integrals of a Gospel;" though the thought, that these integrals might have existed by themselves in a separate work, did not occur to him. The scheme of Eichhorn has

been modified and improved by Bishop Marsh with great ingenuity and ability, but it is so complicated, that a simple statement of it would hardly render it intelligible.

His hypothesis has been controverted by the late Bishops Randolph, Middleton, and Gleig ; and it may be observed in general, that granting him that we have no fault to find with any particular step in his process of reasoning, yet the discovery, without any historical authority, from an analysis of their contents alone, of *ten* different sources to these Gospels, two in Hebrew, and the rest in Greek, some known to all of them, and others only to two or one, is in the highest degree improbable, and that the total silence of ecclesiastical antiquity is a strong presumption against their existence. Mr. Veysie endeavours to explain this verbal resemblance by a plurality of common documents ; but this scheme, if less complicated, being substantially the same, is open to the same principal objections. The ingenuity shewn in its support is attractive, yet I am convinced that the former hypothesis is the true one. It equally solves the difficulties, it is more simple and more natural, and it has the advantage over that of a common document, of explaining what that altogether overlooks, the supplemental arrangement of facts. This arrangement has been examined by Greswell, who observes, “ that it would be a moral impossibility that Mark, compiling an independent Gospel from any document, though the same might have been used by Matthew, should be found in the choice and collocation of his facts to be thus entirely accommodated to him ; or that Luke doing the same should be thus critically accommodated to either, as the use of common materials could account for no instance of agreement which was not absolute and entire.” The discrepancies in these Gospels are thought unfavourable to the hypothesis, that the authors were acquainted with the works of one another, but I think the objection is overrated

by the advocates for a common document. However, for the discussion of these difficulties, I must refer to Townson, Greswell, and Hug, the force of whose remarks would suffer from any attempt to abridge them. Lardner rejects this explanation, because he thinks, as indeed will most who have not given the subject full consideration, that the Evangelists, transcribing from one another, without giving any hint of their so doing, diminishes the value of their testimony; but the real question is, what solution can be offered of a difficulty that must be allowed to exist? and unless a third be offered, we have only to choose between these two. Our unwillingness to admit certain consequences can never justify our rejection of any opinion, against which we have nothing of more weight to urge: it may even happen, that upon more mature consideration, this very unwillingness may appear unreasonable; and I think it has been shown to be so in this instance, by Townson and Greswell. I observe from the latter, (vol. i. p. 62.) that St. John's having seen the Gospels of his predecessors, has never been objected to his credibility in those passages in which he goes along with them; and I would enquire of those who feel any alarm on that score, whether, if they knew that St. Mark had repeatedly heard and conversed with St. Matthew, they would think him on that account less competent to write a Gospel, and what difference there would be between hearing and conversing with him, and reading his work? We should consider also that St. Matthew's Gospel, if prior to those of Mark and Luke, must have been already familiar to Christians. How then can we suppose those Evangelists ignorant of it? and if invited themselves to write, why should they studiously deprive themselves of the advantage of consulting it? What could so effectually teach them when to enlarge and when to compress, as the perusal of his narrative? and St. Luke's preface seems to show, that he had read those

to which he there refers. It is moreover to be remembered, that they are not mere transcribers; there are verbal differences as well as a verbal agreement; and also, while facts related are substantially the same, some new beauty, force, or propriety are introduced by additional circumstances, that show that each has independent sources of information.

This hypothesis, instead of supposed compilations by unknown disciples, of whose character we know nothing, offers us, in fact, in the Gospel of Matthew, an inspired work, the best common document which was made use of by Mark and Luke; and whoever will study with this view any harmony, must, I think, satisfy himself, that as Mark improved Matthew's narrative, so did Luke that of both. They did not, however, wish to supersede the work of their predecessor, and therefore, instead of altering it, left a Gospel each of his own, thus at the same time authenticating what was already received, and imparting additional information. Suppose, for instance, Peter, desirous of leaving his testimony with the Church to the authenticity of Matthew's Gospel: he might have mentioned it with respect, and classed it with the Scriptures, as he does St. Paul's Epistles; but if a question should arise, not whether Matthew had composed a true Gospel, but which was his Gospel, such testimony could no more decide it, than the former the authenticity of the Epistle to the Hebrews. If then a Gospel was afterwards to appear under the title of the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which might be mistaken, and afterwards was mistaken by some, for that of Matthew, how could Peter deposit with the Church a better touchstone, by which to detect its falsity, than by incorporating so much of the genuine one into his own? that is, into Mark's, which may be considered as his. Again, if Luke transcribed several passages from Matthew and Mark, we have the attestation to both, not only of himself, but also of

his companion St. Paul. If we rightly esteem the quotation of a few sentences of Matthew's Gospel in the early Fathers an argument for its authenticity, the many portions of it transferred into the two other Gospels, which are not only earlier, but inspired compositions, carry with them much higher authority, and their own credit is not diminished in consequence; because by enlarging on his account, as they frequently do in relating the same thing, they show that they might have written their Gospels, if they had thought fit, without reading his. Thus this theory, instead of weakening, as Lardner feared it might, the authority of the testimony of the Evangelists, confirms it; because, to use Greswell's words, "the evidence of four competent witnesses, all converging upon the same point, is better than the evidence of any one by himself; and if, besides what each supplies in particular, St. Mark recognises St. Matthew, St. Luke both, and St. John all the three, we are put in possession of a cumulative amount of testimony, so much the stronger and more indissoluble, because it is cumulative and not single.

I will now examine each Gospel separately, and begin with that of St. Matthew, a Galilean, and a publican, that is, a tax-gatherer, who collected the customs at Capernaum. While employed in his profession, Jesus invited him to become his disciple; and he arose, and followed Him. Mark and Luke, in the parallel passages, call him Levi; Matthew, therefore, was probably a name which he assumed according to a practice common, in his age, with Jews who had much intercourse with Gentiles. Of his subsequent history, after the day of Pentecost, and of the time and nature of his death, we have no authentic account. When he has occasion to speak of himself, he does it with humility: he passes over the feast he made for our Lord, and the fact that he left all to follow him; and when he enumerates the twelve Apostles, he places

himself after Thomas, contrary to the order in Mark and Luke. As one of that chosen band of confidential followers, he needed no prototype, either in Hebrew or Greek, but was an original author, and none could be better qualified; for after his call, he constantly attended upon his Master, and was an eye-witness of every event which he records, except the transfiguration, and the agony in the garden, which, as he himself tells us, he gives on the authority of the more favoured three.

We have the strongest internal evidence of what the ancients assert, that his Gospel was composed by a Jew, for the use of his countrymen; for every circumstance that has a tendency to conciliate them is pointed out, and none is introduced that would obstruct its reception by them. He begins, therefore, with a genealogy; and those passages in the prophets which foretel the birth of the Messiah, or describe his actions, are carefully noticed, because the fulfilment of prophecy was the most convincing argument that could be addressed to the Jews. As his object was not a circumstantial biography, he writes apparently not in the order of events, but of things; and his Gospel has been compared in this respect to the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon.

Matthew is distinguished for the clearness with which he relates parables and moral discourses. Of these, the sermon on the mount, and his numerous parables, are memorable examples. His history of our Saviour's infancy records facts not noticed by the other Evangelists, and he has other matter peculiar to his Gospel; as John's reluctance to baptize Jesus; the observation, that Galilee was to be the chief theatre of his miracles, in fulfilment of Isaiah's prediction; his first circuit of Galilee; the sermon on the mount; the cures of the two blind and one dumb man; Peter's walking on the lake; the miraculous payment of the tribute money; the parables of the labourers in the vineyard; of the two sons;



of the ten virgins; and of the talents; and the description of the general judgment; the account of Judas's death; Pilate's washing his hands; his wife's dream; the dead rising out of their graves after the Resurrection; and the history of the guard at the tomb. It is difficult to assign a probable date to this Gospel, as we have to choose between two. The earliest, A.D. 41, eight years after the Ascension; the latest, A.D. 61, when St. Paul first visited Rome. The passage quoted above from Irenæus, is favourable to the later one; and the Evangelist's remarks, that *Aceldama is so called unto this day*, and that the Jews then believed the report spread by the guard concerning the Saviour's body, suit better this supposition. On the other hand, it does not seem likely that the Apostles should separate before it was written.

The language in which Matthew wrote has been also a subject of discussion. The ancients unanimously declare that it was Hebrew; and Erasmus is the first who argued against their testimony. He has been followed principally by Protestant critics, and Campbell supposes their judgment to have been biassed by party feelings. The Council of Trent having decided in favour of the Vulgate, the then received translation of the Scriptures, the Protestants, who appealed to the original text as the standard, were aware, that the Romanists would retort, that in the instance of Matthew's Gospel, they must depart from their own principles; and he concludes, that to silence this objection, they maintained that the Evangelist wrote in Greek. Modern critics reconcile the two opinions by the supposition, that Matthew wrote his Gospel in both languages, the consent of antiquity pleading strongly for a Hebrew original, and the internal evidence for the Greek. This determination of the discussion is not unreasonable, for it may be supported by the example of Josephus, who wrote his history first in Hebrew, and afterwards

in Greek. Eusebius informs us, that Matthew, when about to leave his country, wrote a Gospel in Hebrew; and we can easily conceive that he was willing to translate it at a subsequent period, for the benefit of Gentile converts. This supposition would reconcile the discordant opinions concerning its date, as the original Hebrew might have been written at the earliest period, the Greek translation at the latest. The disappearance of the Hebrew copy is explained by its being so interpolated and corrupted by the Ebionites, as to lose its authority, as well as by the increasing disuse of the language after the destruction of Jerusalem.

St. Mark is supposed to have been converted by St. Peter, for he calls him his son, (1 Epist. v. 13.) and we know that the appellation is applied in this sense by St. Paul to Timothy, *his own son in the faith*. (1 Epist. i. 2.) We also read in the Acts (xii. 12.) of Mark the son of Mary, who is generally believed to be the same; and if this opinion be correct, he was the nephew of Barnabas, (Col. iv. 10.) and the frequent fellow-labourer of Paul. It was at her house that the believers were engaged in prayer for Peter when cast into prison; and to them he came on his miraculous liberation. Her son's Hebrew name was John, and he probably assumed the Roman one of Mark, when he left Judæa as a missionary. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas upon their first mission to the Gentiles, but left them abruptly in Pamphylia. He then went with the latter to Cyprus, (Acts xv. 37.) because Paul would not accept of his attendance. Afterwards he was fully reconciled to him, and during his last imprisonment desires Timothy (2 Epist. iv. 11.) to bring him, bearing to him the honourable testimony, *he is profitable to me for the ministry*. He had been with him before at Rome; for he sends his salutation to Philemon, and the church of Colosse, (iv. 10.) He is said to have founded the church at Alexandria, and to have died there in the eighth year of the reign

of Nero. In his account of our Lord's apprehension in the garden he introduces the fact, the connection of which with it is not apparent, of a young man, *νεανίσκος*, who followed Him, when his disciples had forsaken Him, but who afterwards fled, leaving his linen garment in the hands of the soldiers, *νεανίσκοι*, who attempted to seize him. Townson supposes that this was the Evangelist himself. The conjecture explains the introduction of the incident; and, if it could be verified, might make him, in part at least, an original witness; but this is not material, since his Gospel may be considered as that of Peter. As the plural number was in popular language used of soldiers, it seems natural to give it this sense in the singular, which would render the conjecture improbable.

Papias, our earliest authority, A. D. 110, informs us, that Mark, being Peter's interpreter, wrote whatever he remembered, but not in the order of time; because he was not himself a follower of our Lord. The reason here assigned for the neglect of chronological error is clearly not a valid one; and the assertion is in my opinion untrue. Jerome tells us, that, being requested by the brethren at Rome, he wrote a short Gospel, according to what he had heard Peter relate, who approved it, and delivered it to be read in the Church; but this is inconsistent with the passage of Irenæus cited already, if we take the *ēxodus* or departure of Peter to mean his death, as it does in his own second Epistle. Chrysostom speaks of its being written in Egypt; but the general consent of antiquity, even of the Egyptian writers, decides in favour of Rome; and it has been remarked in corroboration of this opinion, that mentioning Simon the Cyrenian, (xv. 21.) he adds, that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, a fact, which would be interesting only where they were known; and we find the name of the latter among those whom Paul salutes in his Epistle to the Romans. Internal evidence confirms the tradition, that Mark wrote under the direction

of St. Peter; for scarcely any action or conversation is mentioned by him, at which that Apostle was not present; his faults and fall are brought into full view, while whatever redounds to his honour is slightly touched, or wholly omitted; less is said of his speedy repentance and bitter tears, than by Matthew and Luke; the benedictions and promises made to him are left out; and it has an introduction of only fifteen verses before it comes to his call.

From the Hebraisms of Mark's style, which is the least classical of any of the inspired authors, we conclude that he was a Jew; and from his Latinisms, that he lived among the Romans. Cardinal Baronius maintains that he wrote in Latin, and that the Greek is a translation; but this opinion derives no support from history; and those who advocate it forget that the Roman Christians were principally Jews, and consequently more conversant with Greek than Latin, and that the former was generally understood by most persons of Gentile extraction, who had had any education. If St. Paul addressed a letter to them in the former language, it was not necessary that Mark should write a Gospel for their use in the latter. The Gospel itself shows that it was written out of Judæa, and for the use of Gentiles; for terms intelligible only to Jews it either avoids or explains; thus instead of *Mammon*, he uses the common word "riches;" to *Jordan*, he adds "river;" and to *defiled*, or *common hands*, "unwashen," (vii. 2.) To *Corban*, (vii. 11.) he subjoins the interpretation, "that is, a gift." *Gehenna*, which we translate "hell," is literally *the valley of Hinnom*, where infants had been burnt to death in honour of Moloch, and where afterwards a perpetual fire was kept up to consume the filth of Jerusalem. As this application of the word would not have been understood by a foreigner, he adds to it, "unquenchable fire."

From the striking coincidence of Mark's Gospel with that of Matthew, Augustine asserted that he was his epitomizer;

but this hypothesis, contradictory, as we have seen, to the most ancient testimony, though supported by some eminent moderns, is untenable; for Mark deviates from Matthew no less than thirteen times in his arrangement of facts, and has both additions and omissions which it would be difficult to account for on this theory. A mere abridger would also have avoided every appearance of contradiction; but Mark calls Matthew, Levi; speaks (x. 46.) of one blind man, where the other mentions two; and makes Peter twice interrogated by the same maid, (xiv. 69.) instead of once by two, (Matt. xxvi. 71.) According to Matthew, Christ crossed the lake the day after the sermon on the mount; but according to Mark, he then retired to a desert, (Matt. viii. 28—35. Mark i. 35.) His Gospel is, in fact, a critical revision of Matthew's; and as he had paid most attention to the discourses, his own is more full as to the facts; and where his predecessor is most concise he is most copious, and differs enough to be an original authority. He adds many circumstances from the personal knowledge of Peter, and has also much matter in common with Luke, and his order of events is generally the same, though his verbal resemblance to Matthew is greater. What is exclusively his own is comprised in twenty-four verses; but a minute examination will show, that he has continually added particulars to the narratives of both. Thus he alone mentions, that during the temptation Christ was with wild beasts; the surname given to the sons of Zebedee; our Lord's anger and grief at the obduracy of the Jews; and the declaration of his unbelieving friends, *He is beside Himself*.

Simplicity and conciseness are his characteristics: he relates facts more circumstantially than Matthew, and abridges discourses. The only parable peculiar to him is that of the imperceptible growth of corn; and he has two miracles, recorded by no other Evangelist, the cure of a deaf and dumb

man, (vii. 32.) and of a blind one, (viii. 22.) both wrought, not instantaneously, but gradually, and by the use of means, though such as had no efficacy in themselves. His concluding words show, that he did not write till after the Apostles had dispersed themselves among the Gentiles, and we may probably date his Gospel between A.D. 60 and 63.

St. Luke is generally supposed to be the same that Paul calls *the beloved physician*; and suitably to this profession, when he has occasion to speak of diseases, his language is more appropriate than that of the other Evangelists. Thus instead of παραλυτικὸς employed by Matthew and Mark, but unknown to the ancient Greek writers, he uses the classical term παραλελυμένος; and for the διεσώθησαν of the first and the ἐσώζοντο of the second, *saved*, he has ἰᾶτο, *healed*<sup>a</sup>. According to Eusebius, he was a native of Antioch. We know, from himself, that he was not an eye-witness of our Saviour's actions; and he seems to have been descended from Gentile parents, a proselyte to Judaism, and afterwards to Christianity. This conjecture, for it is no more, is founded upon the observation in the Acts, (xxi. 27.) that the Asiatic Jews stirred up the people, because they supposed that Paul had introduced Gentiles into the temple; and Trophimus is mentioned, but not Luke, though (xxi. 15, 17.) then with the Apostle. Hence we infer that he was reckoned among the Jews, which a proselyte would be; and in the Epistle to the Colossians, (iv. 11, 14.) he is classed with those of Gentile descent; for the Apostle, after sending the salutation of those of the circumcision, names Demas and Luke. We conclude that he joined the Apostle at Troas, (Acts xvii.) because he then begins to use the first person plural, and from its change for the third that he remained at Philippi, when Paul proceeded to Thessalonica. (xvii.)

<sup>a</sup> Freind's History of Physic, vol. i. p. 224.

He is with him again on his next visit to Troas, supposed by some on that account to have been his home, and continues with him till the conclusion of his narrative. Of the rest of his history we know no more than that danger could not separate him from his friend; for Paul writes to Timothy, when left by Demas and others, *only Luke is with me*. Some conclude, from the abrupt termination of the Acts, that Paul had not then been liberated; and as Luke's Gospel is avowedly the first part of the same work, and is dedicated to the same Theophilus, they maintain that it was written at Rome during the Apostle's compulsory residence: others believe he composed it in Achaia, and I think that this is the most probable, and that it was not after the Apostle's liberation, but during his former residence there. The date may be assumed to be a year or two after that of Mark. *The Scripture saith, the labourer is worthy of his reward*, writes St. Paul, in his first Epistle to Timothy, (v. 18.) I find the sentiment only in this Gospel, and conclude therefore that we may infer that it was then extant, and that he cites it as an inspired work.

His Gospel is said to have been designed for the benefit of Gentile converts, and therefore he adds some explanation when he mentions Jewish customs; he traces the real lineage of the Messiah up to Adam, to show that he was the seed of the woman, who was promised for the redemption of the whole world; and he marks the æra of his birth, and of the Baptist's announcing the Gospel, by the reigns of the Roman emperors; he likewise inserts examples of kindness shown to Gentiles, and introduces events and parables to encourage them to embrace the Gospel. His knowledge of Jewish usages shows him to be a Jew in religion, while the superiority of his style, which bears a considerable resemblance to that of his companion Paul, confirms the conjecture of his Gentile descent. Many of his expressions are to be found in the best classical authors; and Campbell observes, in

proof of his copiousness, that his list of peculiar words is greater than that of the other three Evangelists taken together, and that many of them are long and compound ones. He has also more of composition in his sentences, of which his first period is an eminent example. He approaches nearer the manner of profane historians, by giving his own opinion: the other Evangelists abstain altogether from praise or censure, as he himself does far more than uninspired authors. For example, he says, that *the people were filled with madness*; (vi. 11.) and that the Pharisees were *lovers of money*; (xvi. 14.) and while Matthew and Mark apply to Judas the neutral term, *he delivered up*, παραδούς, he in one place (Luke vi. 16.) stigmatises him as *a traitor*, προδότης. He supplies several interesting particulars omitted by his predecessors; as, the birth of the Baptist; a second narrative of Christ's infancy; the miraculous draught of fishes; and the restoration to life of the widow's son; the pardon of the penitent thief, and the journey to Emmaus of the two disciples after the Resurrection. He has also a long section, (ix. 51. xviii. 14.) peculiar to himself, containing the particulars of His last journey to Jerusalem, full of the most interesting matter, commencing with the mission of the seventy, and ending with the conversion of Zacchæus. In this valuable section we have the instructive parables of the Samaritan; the persevering friend; the rich fool; the great supper; the prodigal son; the unjust steward; the rich man and Lazarus; the barren fig-tree; the importunate widow; the Pharisee and the Publican; the cure of the woman bowed together with infirmity after eighteen years; and the man suffering from dropsy. He is generally considered to have made a classification of events; but he informs Theophilus, that he meant to write in order; and as he does this in the Acts, we conclude that he is equally methodical in the first part of the same work. Luke takes Matthew as his guide for our Lord's speeches,



but follows Mark in the arrangement of events. We have not now the means of ascertaining how he obtained the information peculiar to himself; but we know that he had opportunities of collecting it while the companion of Paul in Palestine, if not earlier; and we may be satisfied that he would submit it to his perusal. As guaranteed by an inspired Apostle, we therefore consider it as of equal authority with that of Mark, though Paul was not like Peter, an eye-witness of our Lord's ministry.

John was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and had an elder brother, James, also an Apostle, whom Herod Agrippa beheaded; (Acts .xii.) and both were surnamed by their Master, *Boanerges*, or *sons of thunder*, because they would preach the word with power. He is reported by Theophylact to have been a relation of our Saviour; and this tradition, if true, would render his mother's request in behalf of her sons less extravagant, and give an additional reason for leaving the Virgin to his care. We read of his mother as one of the women in attendance upon Jesus; and as there is no mention of their father after their call, he probably did not long survive it. Though a fisherman, he appears to have been in good circumstances, being owner of a vessel, and having hired servants, (Mark i. 27.) It is not probable, therefore, that his sons were altogether illiterate; and the terms ἀγβαμμάτοι and ἰδιῶται, rendered in our version, *unlearned* and *ignorant*, (Acts iv. 13.) do not necessarily mean more than persons in private life, who had not been brought up in the schools, and were therefore not learned in the traditions. His circumstantial account (i. 37--41.) of the two disciples of the Baptist, who followed the Saviour to His lodging, and stayed the day with Him, one of whom he tells us was Andrew, makes it probable that he himself was the other. We find him with Him at the performance of His first miracle at Cana; and he was afterwards called to a

regular attendance on Him, at the same time as Peter and Andrew, while he was with his father mending his nets. His age at this period cannot be ascertained, but it is generally supposed that he was the youngest of the twelve, and that his youth alone prevented his obtaining among them the preeminence in rank which was therefore assigned to Peter. Three times we hear him reprov'd by his Master: once, when a spark of ambition inflamed him and his brother with a desire of preeminence above his colleagues; again, when indignant at their Lord's rejection by the Samaritans; and once more, when his indiscreet zeal forbad one who was casting out devils in the name of Christ, because he followed not them. He was so eminently the object of our Lord's regard and confidence, that he characterises himself as *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, (xiii. 23.) And therefore we find him present at scenes to which no others than his brother and Peter were admitted; that is, at the resurrection of Jairus's daughter; at his Master's only earthly glorification, on the mount; and at his deepest humiliation, the agony in the garden. At the last supper he sat next to Jesus, and was the only disciple who ventured to ask which was the traitor. Though like the rest he *forsook Him and fled*, he is thought to have been the disciple known to the high priest, (xviii. 15.) who followed Him to the palace; and it is certain that he stood near his dying Lord, when He consigned His mother to his care. After the day of Pentecost, he and Peter take the lead as Apostles; and we have St. Paul's testimony, (Gal. ii.) that fourteen years after his first visit to Jerusalem, they were then both there, and looked upon as pillars of the Church. He retired from Judæa probably after the Virgin Mary's death, on the commencement of hostilities. His recollection of his Master's warning and prediction would induce him to depart, and he withdrew to Asia Minor, where he presided over seven cities, living

chiefly at Ephesus the capital. The time of his settling there is unknown, but it was probably after the martyrdom of Paul; at least there is no salutation or allusion to him in the Epistles of that Apostle, though he wrote to two of the cities under John's superintendence, and to Timothy, whom he had appointed to govern the Church at Ephesus. John had no doubt his full share of suffering, intimated in the assurance that he should drink of the same cup as his Master; but he was not required like Peter and his brother to suffer death for his sake. He was, however, as he calls himself, (Rev. i. 9.) *a companion in tribulation* with the Christians of Asia, and was banished to Patmos, one of the islands assigned for the confinement of condemned persons. Here Jesus, with whom he had familiarly conversed as a man, appeared to him in the majesty of Jehovah, and favoured him with a view of the Church triumphant in heaven, and a mysterious representation of its future history throughout its militant state on earth, which He commanded him to record. When the persecution ceased, he was permitted to return to Ephesus, where he lived, it is said, to his hundredth year; and as his life had been so long protracted, it was rumoured among the brethren that he was never to die.

His Gospel is reported to have been his latest work; and critics observe in corroboration of this tradition, that it is written in better Greek than the Apocalypse. Still, says Campbell, it is very full of Hebraisms; but he adds, "the language is no more than the case: let not its homeliness discourage any one from examining its invaluable contents; for the treasure itself is heavenly, committed to earthly vessels, that to the conviction of the sober-minded the excellence of the power may appear to be not of man, but of God. While it bears more signal marks than the other Gospels of being the work of a Jew, the whole strain of it shows that it must have been published at a time

and in a country where Jewish manners were unknown, as they are explained to the reader. There is little force in the argument that it was written before the fall of Jerusalem, because he writes that there is there a pool; as the pool might remain, though the porticos were destroyed, as it does still if the true site be shown; and there appears to be no reason to doubt the truth of the tradition that fixes it to A. D. 97, or 98, more than thirty years after the latest date assigned to any of the others. He omits the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, probably because it had been fulfilled; he writes concerning Peter's death as a past event; and his naming him as the disciple who cut off the ear of Malchus, when the general knowledge of the fact could not injure him, is a presumption in favour of a late date. It is evident that John has little matter in common with the other Evangelists. The only miracle he repeats is the feeding of the five thousand; and this is done as introductory to the discourse to which it led, in which Christ calls Himself the bread which came down from heaven. The supper at Bethany, Christ's anointing by Mary, and His entry into Jerusalem, had been related by the other Evangelists; but he mentions the indignation of Judas at the waste of the ointment, and adds the important circumstance, that Lazarus, whose resurrection they had passed over, sat at table, and by thus publicly bearing witness to this amazing miracle, contributed greatly to the momentary popularity of his Master, and to the determination of the Pharisees to seize Him, contrary to their original design, during the feast. He passes over the Lord's Supper, as sufficiently reported, but adds the washing of the apostles' feet, and the Saviour's farewell consolatory discourse, and His intercessory prayer. He brings a most important accession of information, which no other then alive could have supplied; yet he did not write to supersede the earlier Gospels, for his own narrative would in parts be obscure to readers not acquainted with them. From several examples of this given

by Michaelis it will be sufficient to observe, that he has not recorded our Saviour's declaration before Caiaphas, which caused Him to be condemned for blasphemy: though he mentions his being sent to him; nor does he refer to the account of the false witnesses, though (iii. 20.) he had prepared his readers to expect it. It appears then that ancient writers are correct in maintaining, that he had read the first three Gospels, and wrote his own not to supersede them, but to supply their omissions. Accordingly, he chiefly treats of occurrences preceding the commencement of them, or those which happened at Jerusalem; for the other Evangelists almost wholly confine their narratives to Galilee, and begin with the imprisonment of the Baptist. Thus he records the call of himself and other disciples of the Baptist, and the first miracle at Cana, of which he was an eye-witness, and informs us that our Saviour cleared the temple at the opening, as well as at the close, of His ministry.

If we believe Irenæus, this last survivor of the Apostles had also another object in the publication of his Gospel in his old age; and wrote not only to complete the picture of his Master's ministry, but also to preserve his people from the "vain philosophy" of the Gnostics, against which in its infancy St. Paul had thought it necessary to warn his Asiatic converts. Lampe, Lardner, Tittman, and other moderns of note, not finding in this Gospel the formal confutation of the heresy which they expected, discredit the statement; yet Irenæus's full acquaintance with all the varieties of Gnosticism, and his intimacy with St. John's own disciple Polycarp, render it incredible that he could be mistaken; while we have it on the word of the author himself, that he wrote that his readers might believe that Jesus was both the Christ, and the Son of God. (xx. 31.) His contemporary Cerinthus denied as well the proper humanity, as the divinity, of the

Messiah; and no candid person, I think, can rise from a perusal of this Gospel, without a conviction that it maintains both. It is true that these subjects are not controversially treated; but it appears to me the highest commendation we can bestow, to say that a work instructs the unlearned in the truth, without suggesting the existence of the opposite error. This commendation is preeminently due to St. John; for the terms which he applies in his introduction to our Lord, will be allowed by all believers to be most happily chosen to denote His essential and mediatorial glory, while only those of his own age, or those who study ecclesiastical antiquity, know they are the technical terms of the Gnostics, which he has transferred from their imaginary emanations of the Deity, to Him of whom alone they can be predicated with truth. The Logos of the Gnostics was an *Æon*, that is, an emanation from the Deity, inferior in dignity to many; St. John, therefore, opens his Gospel with the declaration, that it had existed from all eternity, and was not only with God, but was God. Life, Grace, Truth, and Only-begotten, were names of other of their æons; and they are applied by him to the Logos, to show that they are not the titles of other beings, but words descriptive of Him. He also takes care to affirm, in opposition to their notions, that He was the Creator of all things; and instead of only being united for a season with Jesus, or having only an apparent body, was actually made man.

As it is requisite for a full understanding of this Gospel, and of some passages in the Epistles, to have a general notion of Gnosticism, I will here introduce from the Bampton Lectures of that learned and judicious divine, Dr. Burton, our justly-lamented Regius Professor of Divinity, an abridged view of that fanciful system. It originated with Simon Magus, and was completed by Valentinus, who came to Rome in the former part of the second century; and what we know of it is taken

principally from the writers that opposed him. This *gnosis*, or knowledge as it was proudly called, was no new and distinct philosophy, but an attempt to combine into one system the Platonic doctrine of ideas, the mysterious cabbala of the Jews, and the peculiar dogmas of Christianity; and Christ is represented as the agent in communicating it. With the philosophers of antiquity, they could not conceive the possibility of a creation out of nothing, and therefore believed that the world had been brought into its present shape out of pre-existent matter. They also held matter to be intrinsically evil, and this notion supplies a key to most parts of the system; for however their sects might differ in minor points, all rejected as impious the belief, that the supreme God, who was the Father of Christ, and the Author only of good, had originated our world. Those who embraced the Persian doctrine of two independent co-eternal principles, the one the author of good, the other of evil, maintained that it had been brought into form by the latter, while others assigned its production to an inferior *Æon*, who was also the God of the Jews. According to this fanciful theology, the supreme God had dwelt from all eternity in a *pleroma* or fulness of inaccessible light, and one of his names was *Bythos*, to denote the unfathomable depth of his perfections. This Being, by an operation purely mental, or by acting upon himself, produced two other beings of different sexes, from whom several other pairs proceeded by a series of descents, more or less numerous according to different schemes, in the earlier ones eight, in that of Valentinus no less than thirty, and these were called *æons*, from the periods of their existence before time was, or emanations from the mode of their production. These *æons* lived for countless ages with the supreme Being, who is called their first father, because the original source from which they all proceeded, and appear to have been inferior each to the preceding, in proportion to their dis-

tance from him, and their approach to the extremity of the pleroma. Beyond, was matter inert and powerless, though coeternal with the supreme Being, and, like Him, without beginning. At length, one of the æons passed the limits of the pleroma, and meeting with matter created the world, after the model of an ideal one existing in the pleroma, or in the mind of the supreme God. The evil thus produced the Deity endeavoured to cure; and here it is that the Gnostics borrowed largely from Christianity; but they so perverted its tenets, that we cannot even allow them to be heretics in the modern acceptance of the term, but must class them with Jews and Heathens. In their religion, Christ and the Holy Ghost were only æons, and even subordinate to Monogenes, Logos, and Life; and yet they taught inconsistently that Christ was the one put forth to remedy the evil which the creative æon or demiurgus had caused. He was to emancipate men from the tyranny of matter, or of the evil principle, and by revealing to them the true God hitherto unknown, to fit them by *gnosis*, that is, by perfection of knowledge, to enter the divine pleroma. In all their notions concerning him, we find them struggling with the difficulty of reconciling the goodness of God with the existence of evil. Christ as an emanation could have no real connection with matter; yet the Christ of the Gnostics was held out to be the same with him who was revealed in the Gospel; and it was notorious that he was revealed as the son of Mary, who appeared in a human form. Two methods of extricating them from this difficulty presented themselves. They either denied that he had a real body that could be handled, and held that he was an unsubstantial phantom; or, granting that there was a man called Jesus, the son of human parents, they believed that the æon Christ quitted the pleroma, and descended upon Him at His baptism, again to leave Him before His crucifixion. The former of these opinions seems to have occurred first,



and those who held it were called from it Docetæ, because they maintained that he only *seemed* to be a man. These were the earliest heretics ; and, as Jerome says, the body of our Lord was declared to be only *apparent*, while the Apostles were still in the world, and the blood of Christ was still fresh in Judæa.

There was also another sect of much less celebrity than the Gnostics, the Sabians, or followers of John the Baptist, whose errors, according to Michaelis and Rosenmüller, it was the intention of St. John to oppose ; and certainly, unless there had been persons in his time who exalted too high the herald of the Saviour, the Evangelist would hardly have said that he was not the Light, but was sent to bear witness to it. It is also observable, that he connects this introduction, not, as a modern reader might expect, with the birth of the Messiah, but with his baptism by John, whose inferiority he pointedly marks out by contrast ; for he is careful to record the Baptist's acknowledgments, that he must decrease, but Jesus increase ; that he is only sent before Him, but that Jesus cometh from above, is above all, and hath not received the Spirit by measure. It was at Ephesus where this Evangelist wrote his Gospel ; that Paul baptized twelve of these followers of the Baptist ; and Apollos, a distinguished member of their body, was converted to Christianity ; but we afterwards lose sight of them, and they were not known to exist, till modern travellers discovered a few families of them at Bassora. Their sacred books, written in a dialect of Syriac, have been brought to Europe, and translated by Norberg. In them the Baptist is called the Apostle of the light, his baptism the Baptism of life, and Jesus the Disciple of life ; yet even in them He appears as John's superior.

Some passages in this Gospel, no doubt, have been elucidated, or rendered more emphatic, by these critical investigations ; but we should be upon our guard against the

pernicious conclusion to which they have a tendency to lead us, that the main scope of this, or of any other book of Holy Writ, is the confutation of temporary error. If we concede, as men of learning are sometimes too apt to do, that our Lord and his Apostles had principally in view the opinions of their cotemporaries, we shall infer that their declarations concern us but indirectly, and shall comparatively neglect their instructions. But we may rest assured, that the manifold and varied wisdom of God, looking forward to the end of time, has contrived that His word should be a lamp and a guide to every succeeding generation. As to this Gospel in particular, its author informs us, that, out of the innumerable signs which he might have recorded, he has made such a selection, as should convince his readers *that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through His name.* (xx. 31.) The various modifications of Gnosticism have been long extinct, and are imperfectly known even to the learned; but this proposition has still opponents, though of a different description; and this Gospel is as useful as ever, since it reveals in language as decisive against the modern rationalist, as the fanciful heretic of the primitive age, this vital doctrine of belief in the incarnate Son of God, which is the foundation of the Christian's hope, and is the only one that can purify the heart and overcome the world. The style is plain, and less figurative than in the other Gospels. It is generally perspicuous; but when obscure, the defect arises not from the Author, but from the sublimity of the subject, to which no expressions are adequate; he "sounding forth, as a son of thunder, things higher than any intellect can comprehend; and by a certain peculiar majesty of speech, bringing as it were out of the clouds and enigmas of wisdom, a devout knowledge of the Son of God<sup>b</sup>." For parables, St. John substitutes allegories; and these

<sup>b</sup> Basil. Hom. 169. Epiphanius adv. Hær. 79.

instruct us more in the doctrines than in the duties of religion. His Gospel consists almost entirely of discourses; and the few miracles he records are evidently introduced for the sake of the lesson he derived from them. Our Lord's discourses, preserved by the earlier Evangelists, are of a practical tendency; those which he has selected are spiritual, and establish the Saviour's divinity, and the other essential articles of religion which he had affirmed in the Introduction. The same articles are more fully expanded in the Epistles; but there they are presented to us in the language of the writers; whereas John exhibits them in the words of Christ Himself; so that he introduces us to a more intimate knowledge of our Redeemer, than any other inspired author.

In the earlier Gospels, Jesus teaches us as the Son of Man; in the last, He reveals to us His Father and His will as the Son of God, the Oracle who is in heaven. It is not therefore surprising that our divine Master should appear in a different light when He is speaking of heavenly and of earthly things. Still, though His teaching is so different both in substance and in manner in John and Matthew, there is no inconsistency; and as in the former he occasionally descends to topics of ordinary life, so in the latter, (xi. 25.) as when He thanks His heavenly Father for hiding from the wise and prudent what He has revealed to babes, He rises to as high an elevation of thought as in any of the discourses preserved by the beloved disciple. The difference therefore is not in the Teacher, but in the subject which He treats; and this difference is confined to discourses; for, in conduct, there is none, as His character in all the Gospels is precisely the same.

Each Evangelist has his peculiar manner; but simplicity is the characteristic of all, and that in design no less than in style. They neither explain nor command, promise nor threaten, commend nor blame; but preserve one even tenor,

reporting what was said or done by the enemies and friends of their Master, without any encomium on the one, or invectives against the other. They seem unwilling to mention any of whom they have nothing good to report. Thus among the many who were accessary to the condemnation of Jesus, we hear only of the high priest and his coadjutor, the Roman governor, the tetrarch of Galilee, and Judas. The suppression of the names of the former would have impaired the evidence of the history; and justice to the eleven required that the guilty Apostle should be specified. But the names of Joseph and Nicodemus, the only members of the Sanhedrim who did not concur in the sentence of condemnation, and those of persons distinguished for faith and other excellencies, as Jairus, Zacchæus, Lazarus, and his sisters, are preserved; while the sacred penmen make no secret of their own faults and those of their fellow disciples. Of this candour, the intemperate zeal and the ambition of the sons of Zebedee, the incredulity of Thomas, and the presumption and denial of Peter, are eminent examples. Equally certain of all that they advance, the most signal miracles and the most ordinary events are narrated in the same tone, as by faithful witnesses, whose business it was to testify and not to argue. As to their Lord, they appear to consider His character as infinitely superior to any praise which they could bestow. Panegyric is the natural language of a disciple, or even of an impartial historian, after the recital of the unjust execution of any of those excellent men, of whom the world was not worthy; and the colouring is apt to be heightened, in proportion to the degree of the sufferings, and the worthiness of the sufferer. Both Xenophon and Plato close with praise their accounts of the death of their master, the only sage that ever was compared with Jesus; but His biographers do not presume to offer the tribute of their admiration; and instead of pointing out the wisdom and virtue of His life, they leave it

to speak for itself<sup>c</sup>. Hence animation is in a manner excluded from their narratives; no angry epithet or pathetic exclamation ever escapes them; no attempt is made to excite either pity or resentment. They lay before you nothing but facts, and are at no pains to make them appear interesting or credible. About the ornaments of style they show themselves to be indifferent; and their phraseology must have been regarded as awkward, because foreign; yet the more the Gentiles became acquainted with their books, the more they would discover of a charm in them, to which they found nothing similar; insomuch, that they were not ashamed to be taught by writers for whom they had previously entertained a sovereign contempt. Nor was this admiration of the sacred writings to be found only among the vulgar: it originated with them, it is true, but it did not terminate with them; for even those in the higher classes, who would be most shocked with inelegancies and barbarisms, found in the Scriptures an irresistible attraction, which overcame all their prepossessions, and compelled them to acknowledge, that no authors could so effectually convey conviction to the understanding and reformation to the heart, as these artless biographers<sup>d</sup>. This peculiarity supplies a powerful argument, both in favour of their inspiration, and of their own conviction of it. We may perhaps also be authorized to consider it as justifying our own use of unimpassioned language in the repetition of Scriptural narratives, though no terms can be strong enough adequately to express the blessings purchased for believers by the voluntary sufferings and

<sup>c</sup> Newcome on our Lord's Conduct, p. 503.

<sup>d</sup> The information and opinions contained in this section are derived chiefly from Jones's Method of settling the Canonical Authority of the New Testament; Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History; Townson's Discourses on the Gospels; Campbell's Preliminary Dissertations; Bishop Marsh's Translation of Michaelis; Hug's Introduction; and Greswell's Dissertations upon a Harmony of the Gospels.

death of the great High Priest of our profession, Who, having by Himself purged our sins, has entered into heaven itself to appear in the presence of God for us ; and the noblest use of eloquence must be to acknowledge our obligations to the Author of our salvation, and to celebrate His praises, Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

## SECTION II.

*On Harmonies.*

OUR Saviour's ministry having been narrated by four Evangelists, who have each not only peculiar matter, but also circumstantial variations of that which they have in common, it is natural in studying any one Gospel, to compare it with the others. The variations invite, and seem to require, adjustment. We accordingly find, that within a century of the publication of the last, a digest was formed out of them by Tatian, a pupil of Justin Martyr; that afterwards, Eusebius arranged under several heads the matter common to three, or two, or peculiar to one Evangelist; and that Augustine composed a tract concerning their agreement. In modern times above a hundred and seventy have been enumerated, and the number is the best proof of the difficulty of the undertaking. All may be reduced to two classes; one, in which it is assumed that each Evangelist has written in chronological order; the other, in which it is allowed that some have deviated from it. Osiander, one of Luther's fellow-labourers, is at the head of the first, A.D. 1537; Chemnitz, 1593, at that of the second. In the former, of which Macknight's is the best known, there can be little important variation; as, by maintaining that events recorded by two or three, with some minute difference, were not the same, they cut the knot instead of untying it. Thus they have the healing of the servants of two centurions, the raising from the dead of two damsels, the stilling miraculously two storms on the lake with nearly the same circumstances, and with the use of the very same words. In the second class there is of course more variety, because these harmonists, though agreeing in their principle, differ in its application.

A Harmony is a much more difficult work than it appears

to be to those who have not fully considered it; for not only few dates are given, but the events which Matthew relates in one order, are placed by Mark and Luke in another. Harmonists differ as to which they shall adopt; and in this diversity of opinion among eminent men, supported by ingenious arguments, many will be disposed to acquiesce in Griesbach's conclusion, that no chronological Harmony can be made to stand on a sufficiently firm foundation. His own Synopsis represents in parallel columns all the sections common to the first three Gospels; and in order to make as few transpositions as possible, Mark's order is adopted, because the same as Luke's, as far as relates to the facts common to the three. The parts peculiar to each are inserted in intermediate sections. Michaelis, disclaiming also any attempt at a chronological Harmony, has given a very useful one, considered as a general index to the Gospels; pointing out, like Eusebius, where the same transaction is recorded, what the Evangelists have in common, and what is peculiar to each. He follows Matthew's account, with which the narratives of the others are collated. St. John's Gospel is the great obstacle to forming a Harmony; for since he has so little matter in common with the others, each harmonist must divide his into portions, to be inserted according to his own scheme between the sections of theirs. The simplest plan therefore is, like Calvin, to limit our Harmony to the first three. If, however, we bear in mind, that St. John had carefully perused them, and designed his own work to be a supplement to them, we shall not only perceive, that unless we include it, our Harmony will be incomplete, but that it alone enables us to form a satisfactory one. The first point to be settled is the duration of our Lord's ministry; and unless we avail ourselves of his Gospel, we shall probably adopt the opinion of the three first centuries, that it lasted no more than a single year. This opinion is now, I believe,



exploded; yet it is scarcely avoidable, if we attend exclusively to the earlier Gospels, which treat only of the transactions in Galilee, and make mention of no journey to Jerusalem, except that which Jesus took to celebrate the passover, at which He suffered. Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* i. p. 407.) applies to our Lord's ministry in the strictest sense Isaiah's description of it, *the acceptable year of the Lord*; but this is understood by Epiphanius and others who extend it, as only descriptive of the first year, in which the nation was generally favourable to Him. Eusebius, who lived in the fourth century, tells us, that he agrees with those who assign to it four passovers; and this, which has been ever since the prevalent opinion, appears to me to have been established by Greswell. Sir Isaac Newton, who is followed by Macknight, includes even five; and Mann, who is followed by Priestley, revived the ancient hypothesis of one. It is surprising that it could be entertained by any who had read the Gospel of St. John, which expressly contradicts it, for according to that, between the passover at which our Lord commenced His ministry, and that on which He died, certainly one, (vi. 4.) and probably two, intervened. The earlier, it is true, (ii. 13.) he only calls a feast; and upon the interpretation of this hinges the question. Referring to Newcome for a discussion of it, I will only observe, that the plucking of the ears of corn was on a sabbath, immediately following the passover, and that it could have been no other, as on the next, Jesus remained in Galilee; transcribing in support of this view from Greswell's Dissertation this passage: "Among the arguments intended to prove that this feast indefinitely mentioned could not be a passover, none perhaps is more confidently put forward, and none is perhaps more weak and inconclusive, than the following; that the events recorded in this fifth chapter are not sufficient to have occupied a year

and that another passover is mentioned in the next. Very possibly they did not occupy a single day ; but this argument proceeds upon the supposition, that St. John's Gospel is complete in itself, and that it has no supplemental relation to the rest, the contrary to which is among the few positions that do not admit of a question ; and this being the case, it is not to be considered whether St. John's Gospel by itself supplies matter sufficient to have occupied a year, but whether Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in that portion of their Gospels, the true place of which is between these extremes in his, can presumptively be shown to have ; and upon this point the affirmative may be confidently asserted. The interval is, in fact, our Lord's second year, from the beginning of which to its end, by the miracle of feeding the 5000, there is no part unemployed, nor the mode of whose employment it is not possible clearly to ascertain." The third passover, which Jesus did not attend, is rejected as an interpolation by Bishop Pearce ; and certainly, to those who do not consider that it might suit the Evangelist's purpose to insert a mark of time, it will appear to be an unnecessary interruption of the subject, which had better have been omitted ; still a conjectural emendation, invented to support a preconceived theory, would be inadmissible, even if the nature of St. John's Gospel did not afford an ample vindication of the passage. The parable of the barren fig-tree is allowed by all to signify the Jewish nation ; and we may suppose, that when the Lord of the vineyard says that He has come in vain for three years seeking fruit from it, Jesus refers to the duration of His own period of visitation. I consider then the period as settled. We have next to determine which Evangelist shall be our guide.

Doddridge follows the arrangement of Mark and Luke, supposing the testimony of two Evangelists to be preferable to that of one ; while Sir Isaac Newton and Bishop Marsh

defer to that of Matthew, because he was an eye-witness. This statement seems to impeach the accuracy of the Evangelist we desert; yet we claim not only credibility but inspiration for all. The necessity of making a choice apparently places us in a dilemma; but the following consideration will relieve us from our embarrassment. We concede, that Matthew must have known originally the order in which transactions took place; and if he could have forgotten it, the Holy Ghost that inspired him would, if necessary, have recalled it to his recollection. But though he knew the order, it is a gratuitous assumption that he followed it. His Gospel seems to show, that he preferred a classification of events; and Luke's preface appears to indicate, that it was his design to present them in historical order. If indeed Matthew's order had been historical, we can hardly suppose that Mark, under the direction of Peter, would have deviated from it, or that Luke should have agreed with him instead of with the first. Assuming, as I have done, that each Evangelist had seen the work of his predecessor, and meant his own for an improvement of it, I have no hesitation in adopting, with Doddridge and Newcome, the arrangement of the latest, though, as the latter observes, he has some anticipations and some resumptions. In fact, chronological order is not precisely adhered to by any. St. John and St. Mark observe it most, and St. Matthew least. When, however, there is any clear note of time or place in one of the Evangelists, the others may always be brought to a perfect agreement with him, by easy and natural criticism; he affirming the order which they often overlook, but never contradict. All neglect more or less accurate order in the detail of particular incidents, as appears from the phrase, "on one of those days," and "at that time;" they sometimes join together detached and distant events, on account of a sameness in the scene, the person, the cause, or the consequences<sup>a</sup>,

<sup>a</sup> Thus Matthew unites the calling and the mission of the twelve, though

and they often, particularly St. John, make transitions from one fact to another, without any intimation that important matters intervened. The Gospels, therefore, cannot be deemed methodical annals.

From the difficulty of forming a complete Harmony, some divines, as Townsend, maintain, that it is better to explain each Gospel separately. There is some force in his objections; yet, in my opinion, they do not outweigh the advantages of such a work, which of course does not presume to be a substitute for the Gospels, but only to prepare the student for a more careful perusal of them. It may indeed be impossible to make a perfect one, still it must be allowed that many transactions may be harmonized; and Archbishop Newcome justly observes, that the juxta-position of parallel passages is often the best comment, and that a Harmony greatly diminishes our labour in studying the phraseology and manner of the Evangelists. It proves, that Mark, who inserts so much new matter, did not merely abridge the Gospel of Matthew; and it affords plain indications, not only that John's was designed to be a supplemental history, but that Mark and Luke had the same object in view, and therefore introduce additional circumstances which improve the preceding narrative. To prove this satisfactorily, we should have to transcribe almost the whole of the former, and a great part of the latter. I will mention but a few instances. Matthew (xxi.) records the withering of the barren fig-tree, and according to his manner comprehends in one statement the denunciation and its fulfilment. Mark, (xi.) in repeating the miracle, assigns the reason why Jesus expected to find fruit on it, and corrects his predecessor by observing, that the withering was noticed on the following morning. Matthew (viii.) relates briefly the cure of the Centurion's servant. Luke, (vii.) who

the latter was long after the former; and Luke inserts the death of the Baptist long before it took place.

alone repeats it, adds that he was too humble to apply in person, at least in the first instance, but solicited the cure through the Jewish rulers, who pleaded that he was worthy of this favour because he loved their nation, and had built the synagogue at Capernaum. Mark (xvi.) informs us, that Jesus showed Himself after the Resurrection in another form to two of His disciples as they were going into the country; and this appears to be the interesting journey to Emmaus detailed by Luke (xxiv.) When the three record the same event, Mark enlarges materially Matthew's narrative, and Luke generally adds some particulars. Thus Matthew (ix.) relates the miraculous cure of the paralytic man with the remarkable speech of our Lord, and His commendation of the faith of those who brought him; but the reason of this commendation it was reserved for Mark (ii.) and Luke (v.) to give, that they were unable from the crowd to bring him in by the door, but were obliged to mount by an external staircase, and to let down the patient through the roof, which they partially removed for the purpose. Jesus, who as usual was surrounded by hearers, broke off His discourse to heal him. Luke adds, that they were not only, as Mark calls them, certain of the Scribes, but Pharisees and doctors of the law, who had come out of every town, and even from Jerusalem. Again, Matthew (ix.) is content to tell us that a ruler besought him to cure his daughter, who was even dead, that He went into his house, dismissed the mourners, saying that she only slept, and restored her to life. On His way He was delayed by a woman who had had twelve years an issue of blood, and was cured by touching the fringe of His cloak, and He commends her for her faith. Mark (v.) gives the ruler's name, Jairus, and makes him say, *My little daughter lieth at the point of death*. He tells us, that during the delay occasioned by the woman, his servants announce to him that she has died;

but Jesus proceeds notwithstanding to the house ; and he adds, that He suffered only the parents and three of His Apostles to enter, and that He addressed the damsel in Hebrew, and that she was twelve years old. Luke (viii.) adds, that she was his only daughter. Mark says of the woman, that she had spent upon physicians all that she had, and grew worse rather than better. He also records how Jesus forced her to confess the truth before the whole crowd ; and Luke agrees with Mark in substance, though not altogether in words. Further, a Harmony in many instances illustrates the propriety of our Lord's conduct and words, and reasonably accounts for what must appear extraordinary to one who has read only a single Gospel. Thus Mark (i. 16—20.) abruptly introduces the call of Peter and Andrew, and of James and John, and their prompt obedience, as if Jesus had then seen them for the first time. But we learn from John's Gospel, (i. 35—40.) that Andrew had been originally a disciple of the Baptist, had heard his testimony to Jesus, had himself acknowledged Him as the Messiah, and had brought to Him his brother Simon, who then received the surname of Peter. It also appears from it, that John had been a disciple of the Baptist ; and that all three, though they had afterwards returned to their trade of fishing, came with Jesus to Galilee, and were present at the wedding at Cana. A Harmony shows, that our Lord's declaration, (John v. 25.) *The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live*, was made prophetically, before the restoration to life of any who had departed ; and that His reproofs (Matt. xii. 34. Mark vii. 6.) were uttered after He had wrought miracles during two feasts at Jerusalem. We perceive also, that the jealousy of the Jewish rulers was not early awakened by the call of the twelve Apostles to a stated attendance on their Lord, nor by the mission of the Seventy ; for the former

was not till He had kept His second passover, and was about to absent Himself from Jerusalem for eighteen months ; and the latter was only six months before His crucifixion. In a word, we are thus led to discover how one Gospel supplies the deficiencies of the others, and are the more strongly convinced of the credibility of all.

For the best historical and critical review of Harmonies, I refer to the Introduction to Townsend's valuable arrangement of the New Testament, in which our Lord's history is carefully collected from the schemes of Lightfoot, Doddridge, Pilkington, Newcome, and Michaelis, who are in his estimation the principal guides. He considers that the beauty of the narrative is obscured or neglected by harmonizing with a reference only to the number of passovers, or the several journeys of our Lord ; and we must agree with him, that the most instructive and edifying Harmony would be one that should gradually develope the Christian dispensation. The two schemes, however, are perfectly compatible ; and this development is best shown by tracing the progresses of Jesus through the country. I add a sketch of this arrangement, which aspires to trace the ministry of our Saviour not by dates, but by results. The first chapter, including the period from His birth to His temptation, is introductory to His ministry ; and as He did not manifest Himself to be the Messiah till the imprisonment of the Baptist, a separate chapter is assigned to this interval. The reply of the Baptist to the deputation from the authorities of Jerusalem, positively affirming the Messiahship of Him, whom a miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit, and the voice of God, had marked as a superhuman Being, in the midst of assembled thousands—the uninvited attachment of the disciples of the Baptist to our Lord, when their master pointed Him out as the Lamb of God—the unostentatious miracle of Cana, when the silent operation of our Lord's power began

to manifest His still concealed glory—His return to Capernaum with His family as the preaching of the Baptist continued—His still refusing to commit Himself—and the final testimony of John—prove the very gradual manner in which He proceeded to attract the attention of the people, before He would offend the prejudices of those who expected a temporal Messiah. Though the ejecting the buyers and sellers from the temple may be considered as a public manifestation of His Messiahship, He did not verbally assert His claims till the Baptist was prevented from appealing to the people, when He returned to His own town, and there openly declared Himself the Messiah ; and this Townsend considers as the second stage in His ministry.

The first persecution of our Lord began upon His hinting to His proud and jealous countrymen, that He had sheep of another fold ; the service of the synagogue was interrupted, and the peace of the town disturbed. This explains His circumspection ; for He did all He could, consistently with His character and object, to prevent the repetition of such scenes of exasperation and tumult. He proceeded therefore with the utmost caution, refusing to call Himself the Messiah, charging the persons who were healed to tell no man, and keeping back many things even from the Apostles. The various sections of this chapter fully display the wisdom which continued thus gradually to impress the people with the conviction that the Messiah had arrived. The deliverance of the demoniac proved His power over evil spirits. By healing the leprosy, a disease considered incurable except by God, and by referring the leper who was cured to the priest, He exhibited another evidence of His divine character ; and soon after he openly asserted His power to forgive sins, which He had already demonstrated by his cure of the paralytic man. He publicly wrought a miracle at Jerusalem, and declared that He was appointed by the Father to judge the world, and that He was the Lord of



the Sabbath ; and having attracted around Him multitudes of people, He laid the foundation of His church in the appointment of the twelve Apostles. The fourth chapter includes the time from the mission of the twelve to that of the Seventy ; and the fifth, the period from their appointment to His own triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The deeper impression produced by the preaching of His Apostles and of the Seventy, and by His own example, miracles, and teaching, begin to appear more plainly. The agitation of the public mind at Jerusalem—His increased boldness as His personal danger became greater—His assertion of His divinity, and the consequent determination of the Jews to apprehend Him—successively prove the wisdom of the plan upon which our Lord acted, of gradually convincing the people, and then submitting to His painful death. No sooner was the resolution to seize Him taken, than His lamentations over Jerusalem begin, and His parables assume a more prophetic character, descriptive of the reception of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews. At length He works His greatest miracle, the raising of Lazarus from the dead, with which He discontinues His appeal to this kind of evidence. The sixth chapter relates the conduct of the holy Jesus, from His procession to the Temple, till His submission to the guard to whom He was betrayed. And as the time of His betrayal was come, He did not hesitate to reprove, with more boldness than He had hitherto shown, the sects among His countrymen. The seventh chapter contains His trial and crucifixion. The Lamb of God is sacrificed, the atonement is accepted, and man is pardoned. All unite to reject our Lord : the power of Rome, the religious hatred of His apostate church, the changeable populace, combined to fulfil the prophecies, and murder the willing Sacrifice. In the midst of these scenes our Lord never forgot His divinity : when dying as a man, He forgave sins as God ; and while He refused to come down from the cross, declared His power as

Lord of the invisible world. The last chapter opens with His victory over the grave, commencing in His Resurrection, and ending with His Ascension, to sit down, a Priest upon His throne, on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Having decided upon a Harmony, the result may be exhibited either in columns, or in an unbroken narrative. The former is calculated for reference, the latter for perusal. In the former the student judges for himself, in the latter he may be thought to be too much under the influence of the compiler. Tatian, the first who arranged one, called his work *Monotessaron*, one narrative collected out of the four Evangelists, and *Diatessaron*, or a narrative according to the four. His work is lost; but the latter name has been revived by Dr. White, who has thrown Archbishop Newcome's Harmony into this form, and follows him with very few deviations except in the narration of the Resurrection, in which he prefers West's scheme, as modified by Townson. I have followed this arrangement throughout, though I may occasionally prefer others; but I consider the precise order, if attainable, as less important, than the bringing together all the particulars of each transaction.

## SECTION III.

*On the genuineness, credibility, and inspiration of the Gospels.*

WE have shown from Irenæus, (iii. 1.) that in his time the Gospels were ascribed to their respective authors; and he lived little more than a century after their publication, and had learnt Christianity from those who had been taught by the last of the Apostles. In the passage preceding the one already quoted, he says, “ We have not received the knowledge of the way of our salvation from any others than those by whom the Gospel has been brought to us, which Gospel they first preached, and afterwards, by the will of God, committed to writing, that it might be for the time to come the foundation and pillar of our faith. For after that our Lord rose from the dead, and the Apostles were endowed from above with the power of the Holy Ghost, and received a perfect knowledge of all things, they went forth to all the ends of the earth, declaring to men the blessing of heavenly peace, having all of them, and every one alike, the Gospel of God.” These Gospels, or good tidings, as contained in the works of the four Evangelists, appear to have been read in the Christian assemblies during divine service as soon as they were published. Such at least we know was the custom in the time of Justin Martyr, as we learn from his first Apology for Christianity, presented to the Emperor Antoninus Pius, A. D. 140; and the testimony of Tertullian for Africa, and of Origen for Egypt and Palestine, in the following century, proves, that this was not a local custom, but the universal practice of Christian congregations. The fact then of the existence and reception of the four Gospels from the beginning cannot be disputed.

Some, however, may say, that they have perished, and that these we now read are not genuine. To such objectors, if

such there be, I would say with Mr. Lancaster<sup>a</sup>, "Suppose any man were at this day to try to pass off a counterfeit book as the work of St. Paul, or St. John, what would be his success? And can we possibly imagine any time whatever in which the task would not have been as much impossible as now? Or, to use a more familiar example, suppose any man should forge an Act of Parliament, and attempt to pass it off as having been enacted by the Legislature: how many, think you, would submit to the imposture, and receive his forgery as the authentic law of the land? especially if his pretended law required from the subject any painful duties to perform, or considerable sacrifice of his interest or property. And does not reason assure us, that it would be an utter impossibility thus to forge the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, since these require men to die to the world, to renounce its sinful lusts and profits, and to seek their happiness in an invisible and future kingdom?" . . . "Let it be remembered, that the doctrines of the New Testament profess to be written or attested by men endued with the power of miracles and prophecy, and that they profess at the same time to be written for the instruction, in the first instance, of contemporaries. How then could they be first brought to light in a later age, or by persons who were not known to possess those powers which they alleged in proof of their authority?" . . . The task of imposing a literary forgery upon the world has been almost invariably found to baffle the utmost circumspection and ingenuity, for the slightest failure in any particular will lay open the fraud; but the hazard is greatly increased when the work is of any length, especially, says Lardner, if it be historical, and be concerned with characters and customs. The New Testament would present peculiar difficulties, from the style and language, which are neither those of the Classics nor the Fathers, and are what might be expected from the Apostles and Evangelists, and no others;

<sup>a</sup> Bampton Lectures, page 63.

<sup>b</sup> Page 64.

and the precepts and the religious spirit that pervades the Epistles and Gospels are such as no impostor would either be desirous or capable of giving. Our statement is not a mere supposition, but is confirmed by the fact; for the apocryphal writings supply the attempt and the failure. The universal reception of the same Canon for so many ages is in itself evidence sufficient that our Scriptures are, as they profess to be, the genuine productions of the authorized teachers of our faith. "Where do you find a church, or a sect, which rejects any of the books which we receive, or receives any book which we do not receive?" However much they may vary in doctrine or discipline, "the dispute is not about the authority, but the interpretation, of the books<sup>c</sup>." This concurrence is remarkable and of great weight, especially as it seems to have been the result of private and free inquiry; for we have no knowledge of any interference of authority in the question before the Council of Laodiceæ, A.D. 363; and this decree did not regulate but declare the public judgment already formed. That Council did no more than declare, that private psalms ought not to be read in the Church, nor any books not canonical; and then follows a catalogue of such, both of the Old and the New Testament. There was no need of a synod of grammarians, says Le Clerc, to declare magisterially what are the works of Cicero or Virgil; and we no where read of a council of the Apostles, or of any assembly of the governors of Christian Churches, convened to determine by their authority that such a number of Gospels should be received; and in this he only repeats the observation of Augustine. We know the writings of the Apostles as we know the works of Plato, Aristotle, and others, forasmuch as they have the testimony of contemporaries, and of those who have lived in succeeding ages. And we have the additional satisfaction of knowing, that this concurrence was the result

not of an easy acquiescence, but of diligent enquiry, as shown both by the rejection of apocryphal books, and the doubt entertained for a season concerning a few canonical ones, which ended in their universal reception. The prevalence of this doubt and the silence of antiquity disprove the opinion, that the Canon of the New Testament had been settled by St. John; but the fact that he had read the three earlier Gospels, and added his own as a supplement, gives his infallible authority to that portion of it with which we are at present concerned.

The genuineness of the Gospels (and the same may be affirmed of all the books of the New Testament) is supported by the substantial sameness of the text in all versions. Take those of the Roman Catholics, in English, French, Italian, or in any other language, and you will find that they are all derived from what is called the Vulgate, that is, the Latin translation of St. Jerome in the fifth century. Take our own, and you will perceive it to be nearly the same; not precisely, because it is translated from the original Greek; and if you ask where that is to be found, we say, in the many manuscripts of it still extant, some of which may be as old as the fourth century. These books having always been regarded as authority, from which there was no appeal, they were quoted from the beginning, as now, both in the controversial and in the explanatory writings of Christian divines; and some had occasion, or inclination, to do this at greater length than others. Dr. Mill says of Origen, that if we had all his works remaining, we should have before us almost the whole text of the Bible; and in those of Tertullian, his contemporary, says Lardner, there are more and larger quotations of the small volume of the New Testament, than of all the works of Cicero, by writers of all characters for several ages. Paley justly remarks, that to pursue the detail of proofs throughout, would be to transcribe a great part of

Lardner's eleven octavo volumes ; and to leave the argument without proofs, is to leave it without effect ; for the persuasion produced by this species of evidence depends upon a view and induction of the particulars which compose it. To his well-known Evidences I refer for a perspicuous analysis of it, as extending upward from Eusebius to the immediate followers of the Apostles ; and upon the theory here maintained, it may, for the Gospels, be carried up to the inspired writers themselves, making Luke bear testimony to Matthew and Mark, and both Luke and Mark to Matthew. These writings are equally accredited by heretics, and by the opponents of Christianity ; for the emperor Julian in the fourth century, Porphyry in the third, and Celsus in the second, appeal to the same Scriptures as the orthodox. Books so highly esteemed, which were studied at home, read out in public, and quoted in controversies, were multiplied both in the original and in translations as early as the second century, so that they became universally known wherever there were Christians, and they were soon found in every province of the Roman empire. It would be therefore an absolute impossibility, at any period, to substitute false gospels for the true, unless we can conceive, that men of different nations, opinions, and languages, orthodox, unbelievers, and heretics, should all agree to impose upon the world one and the same forgery.

The genuineness of the Gospels having been ascertained, their credibility remains to be established ; for, in order to believe the contents of any history, we ought to be satisfied, not only that the person who records it is what he professes to be, but that he has had the opportunity and ability of knowing the truth, and the honesty to relate it. Now if these books were written by the persons, and at the time asserted, we may say with Lardner, that their contents must be true ; and if they be true, that Christianity is a divine revelation ;

for if the things therein related to have been done by Jesus and His followers, by virtue of powers derived from Him, do not prove a Person to come from God, and His doctrine to be true and divine, nothing can.

It has been frequently shown, that the credibility of the New Testament, though from the nature of the case it does not admit of demonstration, has been proved by moral evidence quite as satisfactory; and that this is more abundant and complete than can be brought in support of any other work. Two of the Evangelists were immediate, and the others were competent, witnesses of the facts which they attest; and upon these Christianity is founded. They were neither enthusiasts nor fanatics, and therefore could not be deceived; while their piety, integrity, and disinterestedness, their sacrifice of their earthly prospects, and their sufferings, are a guarantee that they would not wish to deceive others, and could have no inducement to make the attempt. We might safely accept from men of this character even a narrative intermixed with miracles; but as our hopes are to be built upon what they record, and our conduct to be regulated by their testimony, it is, if not necessary, at least desirable, that they should be secured against the possibility of error. In modern times, there are even Christians who deny the inspiration of the Bible, and maintain, that, allowing the authors to be left to the use of their own faculties, without any supernatural assistance, we have sufficient grounds for believing the accuracy of their report. The evidence may be sufficient to claim our assent, and to render disbelief blameable; still they must concede, that it would be more satisfactory to know that the record which contains the dogmas of our faith, and the history of our Saviour and His Apostles, is the word of God. Such has been from the beginning the belief of the Church; and from this position we deduce the great Protestant principle of the sufficiency of holy Scrip-



ture; so that, to use the language of our sixth Article, "whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Christian faith." We are assured by St. Paul, (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) that the Scriptures which Timothy "had known from infancy," which must have been those of the Old Testament, "were able to make him wise unto salvation;" and he proceeds to say, that "all Scripture is inspired, and able to perfect the man of God, and thoroughly to furnish him to all good works." Many of the books of the Old Testament are cited expressly as Scripture by our Lord and His Apostles: in one sentence He bears testimony at once to the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets; and He repeatedly (Luke xxiv. 44.) has given the sanction of His authority to these "oracles of God committed to the Jews," (and by them, as we may infer from His silence, faithfully kept,) declaring that they testify of Him—that they who know them cannot err—that they must be fulfilled, and that they cannot be broken. Arguing from analogy, we might be justified in predicating inspiration of the authors of the New Testament, even if the Saviour's promise, that He would send the Holy Spirit *to guide them into all truth, and to bring whatever He had said unto them to their remembrance*, had not been recorded, and we had not known historically that it had been speedily and abundantly fulfilled. This, which from the nature of the case appears to us to be highly probable, they who alone could really know it as a fact, continually affirm as true, speaking of their own teaching as equally authoritative as that of the *holy men of God, who in old time spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*. Thus St. Paul in almost every Epistle asserts his own inspiration. In the first to the Thessalonians, supposed to be the earliest he wrote, and which he charges them to read to all the brethren, he ventures to say, (iv. 8.) *He that despiseth (what I write), despiseth*

*not man, but God, Who has given us His Holy Spirit:* and he tells the Corinthians, (1 Ep. ii. 13.) that he speaks *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. We are of God*, says St. John; *he that knoweth God, heareth us:* (1 Ep. iv. 8.) and St. Peter, who writes with the authority of one who had been an eyewitness of his Lord's Majesty, when with Him on the holy mount, when classing the Pauline Epistles with the other Scriptures, puts them on a level with the Old Testament. We know, that upon the day of Pentecost *the Spirit gave the Apostles utterance*, and that thenceforth *they spake the word of God with boldness*. It is at least as desirable, that what they *wrote* for the edification of all ages should be inspired, as what they *spoke* for the instruction of their own; and we may confidently appeal to their writings as containing within themselves sufficient evidence of their own authority, especially when we recollect the station and education of the authors. Not only do they contain doctrines at variance with their original prepossessions, but some which their Master did not deem it expedient to communicate to them during His personal ministry. The expressions moreover as well as the ideas have sometimes a majestic and divine simplicity, which seems to surpass the unassisted faculties of man. "The wiser and better any man is," says Doddridge<sup>a</sup>, "and the more familiarly he converses with these unequalled books, the more he will be struck with this evidence. But several of the arguments arise not from particular passages, but from their general tenor; and consequently they cannot be judged of but by a serious and attentive perusal." It will however in a degree be brought out at once by the force of contrast, if we make the transition from the New Testament to the very earliest and best of the uncanonical Christian writers.

<sup>a</sup> Dissertation on the Inspiration of the New Testament, vol. 3. Family Expositor.

Thus Clement of Rome was the contemporary of St. Paul, and he also wrote to the Corinthians; but such is the difference between the Epistles of the inspired and uninspired author, that we may appeal to the taste and judgment of all, when we affirm, that the internal evidence is decisive. Let us also remember, that Clement and the other Apostolical Fathers cite passages from the New Testament as Scripture, but never claim the like authority for their own writings. One cannot therefore but feel, that the Apostles wrote under some powerful hold, which at once guided and restrained them, and that in the simplicity, and purity, and orderly keeping of all the parts in this venerable record, we have an internal evidence of as broad a distinction between the canonical and the uncanonical, as either the authority of the Church, or the innumerable written testimonies of the Christian Fathers, would serve to establish.

Among those who allow the inspiration of Scripture, there is a difference both as to its extent and its nature. Some are for restricting it to those who were invested with the Apostolical office, thus excluding two of the Evangelists. The distinction, however, is not warranted by Scripture, and does not appear to be reasonable; for works approved by inspired men seem to carry with them as much authority as those they wrote. Now we learn from ecclesiastical history, that Mark's Gospel was approved by St. Peter, and Luke's by St. Paul; and we cannot doubt, that St. John, by writing his own as a supplement to the preceding three, gave an equal attestation to them all. As to the nature of inspiration, a distinction is justly drawn between the inspiration of *suggestion*, which makes discoveries to the mind, and often dictates the very words in which they should be communicated, and the inspiration of *superintendence*, which leaves an author to express himself in his own manner, but watches over him to secure him from error. The former has been

often so injudiciously pressed, that it has driven many as unreasonably to deny the latter. If we maintain the plenary inspiration of the whole, I know not how we can explain the peculiarities of manner and idiom, why St. Paul's style should differ from that of St. James, and why Luke should write better Greek than Mark. I apprehend that the Bible affords examples of both. Thus Jehovah's declarations by His Prophets, and the Epistles to the seven Asiatic Churches, in which St. John wrote down the words which his Lord dictated, are, I conceive, an instance of plenary inspiration; and the same may probably be affirmed of many striking passages in those of His Apostles; but His own discourses being only translations, and given with verbal differences, come under the second division. We claim only an inspiration of superintendence for the historical books, and they will admit of imperfection in style and method; "for if," as Doddridge observes, "such works are not intended as exact standards for oratory, but only to teach us truth in order to its having a proper influence on our temper and actions; such human imperfections as may mingle with it would no more warrant our rejecting its authority, than the want of a ready utterance or a musical voice would excuse our disregard of a person who should bring us competent evidence of his being a messenger from God to us." "We believe then, that the Spirit of God directed the Apostles not only in their addresses to their contemporaries, but in their Epistles, which were meant as a legacy to the Church for ever; and that each Evangelist was guided to select and omit as would best suit his immediate object in writing, and the edification of believers to the end of time. And we believe every line of the New Testament to be stamped with unerring truth, and to be the voice of God speaking in the language of men<sup>b</sup>."

<sup>b</sup> Rennell in reply to Hone.

## SECTION IV.

*On the Text of the New Testament.*

THE arguments which establish the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament, are no less satisfactory in proving the substantial integrity of the text. In writings so highly valued, read by many at home, and heard by more in the congregation, and existing in so many distant places in manuscripts and versions, it is difficult to conceive that important variations could ever have been generally introduced. If the text had been corrupted by negligence or design in one country, its falsifications would have been detected by the copies of another. It must be observed, however, that it is only the *substantial integrity* that is maintained; the *absolute identity* of the most approved manuscripts with the autograph of the original authors, is an untenable position. The Bible has been left by Providence to the care of fallible men; and it is now allowed, that no one perfect copy of either the Old or the New Testament is extant, and that the text must be collected from a critical examination of all.

The more numerous the transcripts and the translations from the originals, the more likely it is that the true reading should be ascertained. Thus the most correct classical writings extant, are those of which we have the greater number of manuscripts; and the most corrupt are those that have come down to us in a single one; in which case it is evident, that conjectural emendation is our only resource. As might be supposed, the manuscripts of the New Testament are far more numerous than those of any other work; three hundred and ninety-four were known to have been collated, some only partially, when Bishop Marsh translated Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament; and we have

from the Bishop a critical description of four hundred and sixty-nine. I refer those who wish for a complete account to that work, and to Mr. Horne's valuable Introduction to the Scriptures, (vol. ii. ch. 2.) which gives a full description of seventeen Uncial MSS. and of several in the smaller character; but there are still many copies, and some of an early date, in public libraries, which have never been examined. Three of the most celebrated, the Vatican, the Alexandrian, and the Ephrem manuscripts, contain the whole Bible, but these are all mutilated: the Revelation and some of St. Paul's Epistles are wanting in the first, the second has lost nearly the whole of St. Matthew's Gospel, and there are numerous chasms in the third. The first, written probably in Egypt in the fifth century, still remains in the Papal library. The second, called Alexandrian, because presented to Charles I. by Cyril Lucaris, who had been patriarch of Alexandria, is now preserved with the rest of the ancient Royal library in the British Museum, and contests the palm of antiquity with the former. The third, which is in the King's library at Paris, so called, because the text was partially erased to receive the writings of St. Ephrem, a Syrian author of celebrity, is considered by Hugo and Luther the second, but is referred by Marsh to the seventh century. Few manuscripts have even the whole New Testament: the greater part have only the Gospels, because they were the most frequently read out in the church; others contain the Acts with the catholic Epistles; some the Acts with those of St. Paul; and manuscripts of the Apocalypse are rare. Some, of early date, are accompanied with a Latin version more ancient than the Vulgate. There are also Lectionaries, which have only the portions selected for lessons. Generally speaking, the earliest are the most valuable, but scarcely any are dated; their age therefore is conjectural, and there is a considerable difference of opinion among those who have studied the

subject. Thus Woide, who edited a fac-simile of the New Testament portion of the Alexandrian MS., maintains, that it was written towards the end of the fourth century, while Michaelis assigns it to the eighth, and Oudin to the tenth. The Cambridge or Beza MS., so called because presented by that Reformer to the University, a Greek and Latin MS. of the Gospels and the Acts, is referred to the second century by Dr. Kipling the editor, and is considered by Michaelis to be the most ancient that is extant ; while it is supposed by others to have been written in the fifth, the sixth, or even the seventh century. The Latin and Greek MS. of the Acts, called the Laudian, because given by Archbishop Laud to the Bodleian library, is assigned by Hearne its editor to the eighth century, while Astle thinks that it was written early in the fifth.

Still there are criteria which will enable us to form a probable estimate of their relative ages ; and even those who have not access to the manuscripts themselves, have in a degree the power of judging, as specimens of several of the most important ones have been published by Horne ; and the Beza and the Alexandrian MSS. have been edited entire in types which exactly represent the original characters. These criteria are derived from the material on which they are written, or from the character employed. The use of vellum is earlier than that of paper ; and cotton paper dates from the ninth, linen paper from the twelfth century. Those written in capital, called uncial, letters, are earlier than those written in small ones, which only came into general use in the latter part of the tenth century. These uncial letters also differ in shape and other particulars.

There are also internal marks of age. Ammonius in the third century made a new division of the Gospels ; and therefore of course none which like the Alexandrian MS. have his sections can be earlier than that date. Stichometry also, as it is called,

affords another internal criterion, and shows that the Beza and Laud MSS., which are arranged in conformity to it, are less ancient than persons unacquainted with that invention have supposed. It was about the middle of the fifth century that Euthalius, an Egyptian Bishop, divided the New Testament into *stichoi*, that is, lines to direct the reader in pausing. As some of these stichoi were exceedingly short, containing sometimes only a word, in the course of time in order to save space a point was substituted for a blank at the end of each, and this was the origin of punctuation. Parchment being expensive, writings were obliterated to substitute others that were in more request. This, however, was in some instances so imperfectly effected, that traces of the original may be discerned; and from manuscripts of this description, which are known by the name of Palimpsesti and Rescripti, the perseverance of modern scholars has restored the text of the Greek Scriptures, as well as considerable portions of the Classics. St. Matthew's Gospel was thus recovered by Dr. Barrett, 1801, from a Rescript in the library of the University of Dublin, and the whole Bible from the Ephrem MS.

When the unlearned hear of 30,000 various readings, collected by Dr. Mills, and of 150,000, which Griesbach's critical edition is said to contain, it is natural that the information should alarm them. The result, however, of these investigations is the very reverse of what they fear, for this minute examination of manuscripts, versions, and quotations from the Fathers, has established the substantial integrity of the text. Of this mass of readings, which at first sight appears so formidable, not one hundredth part makes any material alteration in the sense. They consist principally of palpable errors in transcribing, or of grammatical differences, which cannot be represented in a translation. Some are intended corrections, in which easier words are substituted for those that are obscure, and attempts are made to bring the text



nearer to the Greek idiom. Others, indeed, change the meaning; but the alteration is generally of little importance, as *found* for *saw*, Matt. ii. 11. and v. 47. *heathen* for *publican*. Marginal notes have occasionally been transferred to the text; words that copyists did not understand, or thought superfluous, have been omitted; and parallel passages have been altered, to render their conformity to each other more perfect. Wilful corruption has been charged upon the ancient heretics, and by them upon the orthodox; but, under Divine Providence, attempts of this kind have been defeated, as from the many copies extant, either of the original, or of early versions, it was impossible that they could tamper with all. Instances of these readings are, *Neither the Son*, Mark xiii. 32. *Born of Thee*, Luke i. 35. *There appeared an angel to Him from heaven strengthening Him*, Luke xxii. 43. *Before they came together*, Matt. i. 18. all of which may be established, I believe, as genuine. The most remarkable omissions are the twelve concluding verses of Mark's Gospel, which Griesbach retains; the history of the woman taken in adultery<sup>a</sup>, (John viii. 1—11.) which he inclines to think ought to be rejected; and the testimony of the three heavenly witnesses, in St. John's first Epistle<sup>b</sup>, (v. 7.) which, with the almost unanimous

<sup>a</sup> This history is found in all the Latin manuscripts, and in most of the Greek, but does not appear in that of the Vatican and some others of note, nor in the Gothic and Syriac versions. It is rejected by Origen, and is not noticed by Chrysostom and other commentators. Calvin, Beza, Grotius, Hammond, Le Clerc, and Griesbach decide against it; but Michaelis and Middleton maintain its authenticity. The first who mentions it is Tatian, who flourished A.D. 160. Dr. Mill thinks that it was marked with an obelisk, that it might not be read out in public, and that it was in consequence dropped by transcribers. Its omission requires some alteration in the following verse; and I for one cannot conceive how any writer could have invented an incident so much in harmony with our Lord's character.

<sup>b</sup> The testimony of the three heavenly witnesses is celebrated for the many learned discussions which it has occasioned, from the days of Erasmus to our own; and the controversy has been of great service, as it has contributed, probably, more than any other, to the improvement of Biblical criticism. Mr. Butler, in his *Horæ Biblicæ*, gives a condensed statement of the evidence

concurrence of critics, he maintains to be an interpolation. Of the readings which he condemns, or holds doubtful, few affect any point of doctrine or morals. There are, however, two, which in the received text unequivocally assert the

on both sides; but the most complete view may be seen in Horne's Introduction to the Scriptures. It was omitted by Erasmus, in his first edition of the Greek Testament; but he promised to insert it in a future one, if the passage could be shown him in a manuscript; and, as he says, to avoid calumny, he introduced it into his third. A single authentic manuscript in which it occurs was produced, the Codex Montfortii, which is in the library of Dublin University, for which a higher date is not now claimed than the thirteenth century. It appeared, however, also in the Complutensian Bible; but we cannot judge of the character of the manuscripts which were used for that work, as they are lost: it is not found in any of the ancient versions except the Vulgate, and only in some manuscripts of that; nor is it quoted by any of the Greek Fathers, even when they appeal to the preceding and succeeding verses. It is therefore rejected by the most approved critics: still, Dr. Nolan and Dr. Hales have endeavoured to re-establish its credit; and Bishops Middleton and Burgess argue strongly in its favour. It is found in the Liturgies of the Greek and Latin Church, and is cited by the Latin Fathers. In my opinion, the objections are outweighed by the internal evidence, which at least justifies our suspending our judgment; for the omission leaves the sense imperfect; (a comparison being introduced in the ninth verse, between the testimony of men and the testimony of God, in which the apostle must refer to these heavenly witnesses;) and vitiates in two particulars the grammatical structure of the original, which I must copy to render my remarks intelligible; *τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες· τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα. καὶ οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι*: as proposed, the text makes a masculine participle agree with three neuter nouns, whereas it would have been required by the two masculine ones *Πατὴρ* and *Λόγος* and the *τὸ ἓν* of the disputed text, the one testimony must refer to the former one in the preceding verse. The Unitarians exult in its rejection, as if the doctrine of the Trinity must be rejected with it; and indeed incautious Trinitarians have led them to this boasting, by exaggerating its importance. All candid persons will allow, that more decisive texts may be brought forward, as the baptismal form, and St. Paul's benediction. Indeed, it seems only indirectly to support this dogma, for it is the apostle's design to urge the unity, not of the nature, but of the testimony, of the three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, to the leading truth of the gift of eternal life through the Son of God. It may be proper to observe, as Griesbach is opposed to this and other readings favourable to the Trinitarian hypothesis, that he had himself no Unitarian bias; "for there are," he says, "so many arguments for the true Deity of Christ, that I see not how it can be called in question, the divine authority of Scripture being granted, and just rules of interpretation acknowledged. The exordium of St. John's Gospel in particular is so perspicuous, and above all exception, that it never can be overturned by the daring attacks of interpreters and critics."

divinity of the Saviour; *the Church of God, which He hath purchased by His own blood*<sup>c</sup>, (Acts xx. 28.) and *God manifest in the flesh*, (1 Tim. iii. 16.) He decides against the first; but concerning the second<sup>d</sup> speaks with some hesitation. I reserve the consideration of their authenticity for a note, only adding here, that even granting that these texts and that of the Heavenly Witnesses must be surrendered, the

<sup>c</sup> Of Acts xx. 28. there are no less than six various readings;

1. Feed the church of God, which He hath purchased, &c.
2. ————— of Christ; old Syriac, but in no Greek manuscript.
3. ————— of the Lord; preferred by Griesbach and Wetstein, and found in the Alexandrian and most of the uncial MSS.
4. ————— of the Lord and God; Complutensian Polyglott, Slavonic version and many MSS., but not the most authentic ones.
5. ————— of the God and Lord, only one MS.
6. ————— of the Lord God, only one MS.

Upon the whole, the external evidence preponderates in favour of the received text, which is found in the Vatican manuscript and in the Vulgate, as well as in most of the Fathers, beginning with Ignatius; and the expression is in unison with St. Paul's style, occurring no less than eleven times in his Epistles, whereas *the Church of the Lord* is a phrase unknown to the New Testament. It is, however, frequent in the Septuagint, from which it may have found its way into the Alexandrian manuscript. But it should be recollected, that in that version, *Lord* is the translation of Jehovah. If, observes Michaelis, Luke wrote Θεοῦ, the origin of Κυρίου and Χριστοῦ may be explained either as a correction of the text, or a marginal note, the blood of God being an extraordinary expression; but if he had written Κυρίου, it is inconceivable how any one should alter it into Θεοῦ.

<sup>d</sup> The passage in the first Epistle to Timothy has three variations, Θεός, Ος, Ο; and those who know that the first is in uncial manuscripts contracted to ΘΣ. will see at once how easily one reading might be substituted for the other; and from the present state of the Alexandrian, it is now impossible to ascertain which it read; but (see Dr. Berriman's Discourses) there seems no ground for doubting that it supports the received text, which is found at least in a hundred manuscripts. The Vulgate reads *Quod*, answering to the O of the Clermont manuscript. A reference to the context will show that the dispute is not material, for Paul is evidently speaking not of the dogmas but of the author of Christianity, as seems unquestionable, from the terms *manifest in the flesh, seen of angels, received up into glory*; and the only difference, if we substitute the pronoun, is, that we must go back for an antecedent to the contested word Θεός, which we shall find in the genitive case in the preceding verse; so that whichever reading we prefer, the sense will be the same, though it is more perspicuously stated in the received text.

candid will allow that the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God, are directly affirmed in other passages, the genuineness of which has never been doubted; that they pervade St. John's Gospel, and are evidently assumed throughout the Epistles as the basis of reasoning and exhortation. It has therefore been justly observed, that "when the eyes of the understanding are opened, and the soul made acquainted with, and attentive to, its own state and wants, he that runs may read the Divinity of the Saviour, not in a few detached texts of a dubious import, and liable to be twisted and tortured by the arts of criticism; but as interwoven in the very frame and texture of the Bible, and written in it as with a sunbeam\*."

We know not how long the autograph copies of the Books of the New Testament were preserved, but they must have perished at an early period; for citations different from the received text are found in the earliest Christian Fathers, which could hardly have occurred, as long as there was the power of correcting them by the originals. Some of these differences indeed may be explained by the habit of quoting from memory; but Clement of Alexandria, who died early in the third century, (*Strom.* iv.) specifies various readings properly so called, and several of his own differ from the received text, and agree with that of Beza's MS. This variation must in his time have attracted attention, for Celsus his contemporary accuses the Christians of designedly corrupting the text. Origen allows that it had been done by some of the Gnostics, but maintains that the charge was unjustly brought against the orthodox. In his *Homily on Matthew xix. 19.* he speaks of many differences in that, and in the other Gospels, and points out three causes, the negligence of transcribers, the wicked rashness of those who purposely altered, and the liberty taken by others, of adding or

\* Newton's *Cardiphonia*, vol. ii. p. 10.

expunging according to their own judgment. He goes on to speak of what he had accomplished for the correction of the Septuagint, and of the difficulty of restoring the text of the New Testament; but neither in this, nor in any other passage, does he refer to any autograph copy. Some therefore of these readings are previous to any manuscripts now extant, none of which at the utmost can be traced higher than the fourth century; and consequently the Versions prior to that period, as the Syriac and the Vulgate, having been translated from earlier copies, have a critical value scarcely, if at all, inferior to the original text.

The diligence of collators in modern times having accumulated thousands of various readings, biblical critics began to think of laying down rules for determining their comparative merits. In prosecuting the study, they perceived that some manuscripts had an affinity with others: they observed, as might have been expected, a resemblance between the versions and MSS. of the same countries, and discovered, as they conceived, from a comparison of the quotations in the writings of the Egyptian and Latin Fathers, that there had existed as early as the third century two families or editions of the New Testament. One of these is the received text, which is found in the majority of manuscripts; the other is contained in those MSS. that accord with the Latin Vulgate; and Bentley conceived a project of forming a correct text, by adapting the former to the latter. Bengel and Semler suggested a more comprehensive system, which was completed and established by Griesbach. For the authority of Jerome, who lived in the fifth century, he substituted that of Origen, who lived in the third; and the attention which he paid above all the ancients to biblical criticism, seems to entitle him to this preference. To the two families already named he added a third, and he named them from the regions in which he supposed them to prevail, the Alexandrian, the Western, and the Byzantine.

Finding a striking coincidence between the Scripture quotations of Origen and the celebrated MS. brought from Alexandria, the city where he first distinguished himself as a teacher, Griesbach assigns the manuscripts which accord with these to his Alexandrian family. The Western family is formed of a set of manuscripts which have been principally found in Europe, and which, where they differ from the peculiar readings of the other two, possess many coincidences both with the Oriental and the Latin translations. The manuscripts which coincide with those which have been brought direct from Constantinople, he distinguishes as the Byzantine family.

1. The Alexandrian edition is found in the Vatican MS. for the Gospels, and in the Alexandrian for the other books. It coincides with the quotations not only of Origen, but of Clement, Cyril, and other authors of Alexandria, and is followed by the Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, and Syro-Philoxenian versions.

2. The Western, which agrees with the Vulgate, seldom varies from Beza's MS. in the Gospels; in the Acts and the Catholic Epistles it chiefly accords with the Alexandrian recension, and is cited by the African Fathers, as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine.

3. The Byzantine edition, which is found in the Gospels in the Alexandrian MS. and in the other books, in the Harleian MS. 5684, and the Moscow, Mt. V. is the Received Text. It is the original of the ancient Russian version, and is cited by the Gregories, Chrysostom, Theophylact, and most of the Greek Fathers.

Each recension has its characteristics; the Western preserves Hebraisms and solecisms, which the Alexandrian has exchanged for readings more classical, or calculated to relieve the text from difficulties. The Byzantine resembles it in this respect, and preserves the Greek idiom still purer

than the Alexandrian. The manuscripts of the Alexandrian and the Western editions are comparatively few, especially those of the second, having been generally superseded by the Byzantine.

Assuming this scheme of Griesbach, or any similar one, to be established, the evidence of manuscripts will not be counted, but weighed. A hundred, that agree because they are all the transcripts of one original, will be regarded as only a single witness; while the reading of a very few will be adopted, if these few be of two or three families. It is to the Alexandrian family that Griesbach ascribes the highest authority, and he endeavours to confirm it by the collateral testimony of the Fathers and of early versions. His theory, which is generally followed, has lowered the credit of the Received Text; but this has found defenders in Matthæi on the continent, and in our country in Dr. Nolan, who maintain its doctrinal integrity. Griesbach's object was to establish the Alexandrian text by the united testimony of Clement and Origen, and to strengthen it by an alliance with the Western, in order to form a counterpoise to the immense superiority in numbers on the part of the Byzantine. According to Nolan, both the pillars on which this system rests are unsound. He argues, that as Origen settled early at Cæsarea in Palestine, his authority for an Alexandrian Text cannot be reasonably claimed, and that it is unsafe to appeal to any of the Fathers, who generally quote from memory. He allows, that the uniformity of this class of manuscripts with both the Western and Eastern versions, has convinced many that they contain the genuine text. The force of the argument, however, he hopes to remove, by showing, that the Western had been corrected, first by Jerome, and afterwards by Cassiodorus, and that the general coincidence of the Eastern may be traced to the influence of an edition of the original, published by Eusebius at the command of Constantine. This he endeavours to

establish from the prevalence of the sections and canons of Eusebius, both in manuscripts and in these versions, and from the accordance of their texts with his opinions, by which are explained the two omissions in the Gospels, (Mark xvi. 9—20. John viii. 1—11.) mentioned above, and the doctrinal peculiarity of remarkable readings. (Acts xx. 28. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 John v. 7.) But though Nolan prefers the Byzantine or Received Text, he agrees with Griesbach in reducing all manuscripts to three classes, only substituting Palestine for Alexandria, and Egyptian for Western. He conceives that these classes agree with the varieties of the Latin version: the Byzantine with it in its original state, which is called the *Italic*; the Western with it as revised by St. Eusebius of Vercelli, the friend of St. Athanasius, at the desire of the Pope; and the Alexandrian with it as again revised by St. Jerome. The first is contained in a MS. at Brescia, written in silver characters on purple vellum; the second, supposed to be in the handwriting of St. Eusebius, is deposited among the relics in his Church. Having shown the existence of these three classes from internal evidence, he endeavours to establish it by the authority of St. Jerome. “The world,” says that Father, “is divided into three parties, by three editions of the Greek Bible<sup>f</sup>. The example of Origen had been followed by Lucian of Antioch, afterwards a martyr in the Diocletian persecution, and by Hesychius, an Egyptian Bishop; and while the original revision was preferred in Palestine, that of the former prevailed from Constantinople to Antioch, and that of the latter in Egypt.” He is here only speaking of the Septuagint, but their revisals must have comprehended the New Testament; for he says in another place<sup>g</sup>, that Pope Gelasius prohibited the Gospels, which Lucian and Hesychius had falsified, and that the Western Church remained steadfast to the established text. What share Origen

<sup>f</sup> *Adversus Rufinum*.

<sup>g</sup> *Prolog. in Nov. Test.*



had in correcting this, cannot now be ascertained; but the variety of readings in manuscripts of all ages, and the silence of ecclesiastical antiquity, sufficiently prove, that there never was any revision of the text approved and formally adopted by the whole Church.

Dr. Nolan's scheme is only a modification of that of Griesbach, but there are critics who reject it altogether; and it must at least be confessed, that it is less satisfactory upon examination than it appears to be when first stated; for no individual manuscript preserves any edition in a pure state, but is assigned to that, the appropriate readings of which preponderate in it. It is material to observe also, that the three texts do not differ so much as the terms, families, recensions, editions, seem to imply. Still, whichever we prefer, or whatever mode of explaining the existence of various readings we adopt, the more the subject is investigated, the more reason we shall find to be satisfied, that though the literal identity of the received with the original text is abandoned by all, the doctrinal identity is established; and that even the most faulty manuscript extant, supposing all others to have perished, would not pervert one article of our faith, or affect one moral precept. In conclusion, I observe, that their general uniformity demonstrates both the veneration in which the Scriptures have been held, and the care that was taken in transcribing them, and affords us an additional and most convincing proof, that they exist at present in all essential points, the same as when they came from the hands of their authors.

The consideration of manuscripts leads us to that of printed copies. It is natural to ask, what manuscript the first editors adopted; but the result of our enquiries is less satisfactory than is perhaps expected by those who have not studied the subject; as the answer must be, that they had not access to those which are now acknowledged to be the best, some of which have been brought to light since their time; that

those they used were few, and comparatively modern, and that they do not always abstain from conjectural emendation. The primary editions are no more than three; the Complutensian, and those of Erasmus and Beza, from which all succeeding ones have been derived. The art of printing had been employed in giving circulation to the Latin Bible, more than half a century before it was applied to the original text. Aldus had printed as an experiment, in 1504, the first six chapters of St. John's Gospel; but the honour of giving to the world the whole Testament in the language in which it was written was reserved for Erasmus, who published it at Basle in 1516. Some of the MSS. which he used are in the public library of that city, but none are of great antiquity: one of the fifteenth century is the basis of his edition of the Gospels; and he had only one imperfect one of the Apocalypse, the chasms in which he filled up with his own Greek translation from the Vulgate. The Greek Testament had been printed two years earlier as a volume of the first Polyglott Bible, which had been prepared under the patronage of Cardinal Ximenes at Alcala, the ancient Complutum, from which it derives its appellation, which distinguishes it from the later ones of Paris and London. Leo X. did not permit it to be sold till 1522, by which time that of Erasmus had reached a third edition. The fourth, 1527, he corrected from it, particularly in the Apocalypse. The manuscripts from which the Complutensian text was formed have disappeared, but there is internal evidence for their being of recent date. Beza formed his first text, 1566, upon the third of Robert Stephens, 1550, which is little more than a reprint of the fifth of Erasmus, 1535; but that of 1565 is altered chiefly from his own celebrated MS. and that of Clermont, for St. Paul's Epistles; and the edition of 1598 is particularly interesting to us, as being that adopted as the basis of our authorized version. Upon Stephens's third edition, and the improved

text of Beza, a new one was formed, it does not appear by whom, and published in 1624 by Elzevir, which has acquired the appellation of the Received Text, and is the one in universal use. Other editions are distinguished by their collections of various readings, but they retain his text. Curcellæus, the first editor of note of this description, 1658, was followed by Walton in the English Polyglott, and by Bishop Fell, 1675; but the celebrated edition of Mill, published at Oxford in 1707, the result of thirty years' labour, and containing all the readings then known, formed an æra in biblical criticism. The edition of Wetstein, which appeared in 1751, is considered by Bishop Marsh as invaluable. His enumeration of various readings far surpasses those of his predecessors. He collated many manuscripts for the first time, and recollated others, inspected the versions and the quotations by the Fathers, and rendered the use of his readings more easy, by describing the character of the manuscripts he used. Matthæi published a New Testament at Riga, 1782, with readings exclusively from the Moscow manuscripts of the Byzantine family; and Birch, the Gospels at Copenhagen, 1788, with readings from the Escorial and Italian manuscripts, which had not been previously examined, and afterwards added the readings of the other books, 1798. But of all the critical editions, that of Griesbach, 1796, is universally allowed to be the most complete. His object was an arrangement of the readings which had been discovered up to his time; but as, from the number of his discriminating marks, it is difficult for one imperfectly acquainted with his work to ascertain their respective merits, Dr. White, 1811, has supplied us, in his *Criseos Griesbachiensis Synopsis*, with a convenient index.

The ancients had, prior to the fourth century, a double division of the New Testament, into longer and shorter sections, *τίτλοι* and *κεφαλαια*, in Latin *breves* and *capitula*.

The latter are called the Ammonian sections, from their inventor, Ammonius, of Alexandria, who lived in the third century; and as the use of them was subsequently recommended by Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, they are frequently called by his name. To show their difference it may be observed, that Matthew's Gospel contains 68 of the first, and 355 of the second, even the former being much shorter than our chapters, which were made for both Testaments by Cardinal Hugo de Sancta Clara, when he projected a Concordance. This division is obviously capable of improvement. In the Gospels it is open to few serious objections; but in the Acts it makes us lose sight of the fact, that all St. Paul's Missionary journeys began and ended with Antioch. In the Epistles it strangely severs relative duties, and frequently, as Romans iv. v. vii. viii. and John i. ii. breaks the chain of reasoning. The Cardinal subdivided them into smaller portions by the first seven letters of the alphabet, which he placed at equal distances in the margin; but this division has been superseded by that into verses, which, for the New, was invented by Robert Stephens, and first introduced into his edition of 1551. The Geneva English Testament, printed in that city, 1557, is the first English translation, in which it is used.

The punctuation seems to have been commenced by Jerome, who introduced the comma and the colon. The note of interrogation was not used till the ninth century. The editors of printed editions have placed the points arbitrarily; and Stephens varied his in every edition. As they form no part of the original, we are of course entitled to alter them according to our judgment. I mention as an instance, that not only Augustine, but all the Greek Fathers, from Irenæus to Chrysostom, marked the third and fourth verses of the first chapter of John's Gospel in the following manner: "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any

thing made. That which was made in Him was life." The present punctuation was introduced by Chrysostom and will be generally approved, though the former one is preferred by some modern critics.

## SECTION V.

### *On the Language of the New Testament.*

HAVING shown that the authenticity of the New Testament may be established by the strongest evidence, and that the text as handed down to us is sufficiently correct to make us, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, *wise unto salvation*, we have next to examine the language in which it is written. That language, it is well known, is Greek; but it is Greek of a peculiar character, as all who are conversant with the classical authors will allow; and to distinguish it from that in which they wrote, it has been termed Hellenistic. It is not a distinct dialect, because it differs not in grammar, but in idiom; that is, the inflection of nouns and verbs is the same, but the phrases are different, being precisely the same sort of difference as that which exists between the English composition of a native and of a foreigner, who, though he understands the rules of grammar, thinks in his own language what he afterwards writes down in the other. Thus in the New Testament, the phraseology is Hebrew, but the words are Greek. When the Apostles went beyond the Holy Land to preach the Gospel, it was necessary that they should make use of another language, their own being confined to Syria; and Greek, which seems then to have been spoken over the Roman empire even more than French in modern Europe, had many advantages over Latin, especially to those whose missions were chiefly directed to the eastern provinces. Cicero (*pro Archia*) had confessed even when Rome was at the height of glory, that Latin was confined to its own narrow

limits, while almost all nations read Greek. That language therefore was naturally preferred as the vehicle of a revelation, alike designed for Gentile and Jew. The persecution of the latter under Antiochus Epiphanes, the encouragement held out to them by the Ptolemies kings of Egypt, and other concurring causes, had occasioned a considerable dispersion of the nation, not only in Asia and Africa, but even in Achaia and Italy, as appears from their historian Josephus, from the Acts of the Apostles, and from Roman authors. The gradual substitution of Greek for their own tongue naturally followed among these colonists; and this was much promoted by the translation of their Scriptures into the Alexandrian dialect, which, being used in their synagogues, soon became the standard of their language. Hence a certain uniformity of idiom would arise among the Jews speaking Greek, wherever dispersed. We find the distinction between them and the Jews of Palestine marked in the Acts of the Apostles, in which we read, that there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected; and for these there is a peculiar word in the original, *Ἑλληνισταί*<sup>a</sup>, Hellenizing or Grecianizing, the real Greeks being called *Ἑλληνες*, Hellenes. As this version is so often quoted in the New Testament, and has contributed so largely to form the style in which it is written, it becomes desirable to introduce a brief account of its origin and character. It is called the Septuagint, because it is the reputed work of seventy-two translators, sent for the purpose by the high-priest at the desire of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, who wished to deposit a copy of the Scriptures in the library which he was then founding at Alexandria. This statement is contained in a letter ascribed

<sup>a</sup> In like manner Diodorus Siculus, and other historians, distinguish the Greek settlers in Italy from the natives, *Ἰταλοί*, by the similar word *Ἰταλιῶται*, and those in Sicily from the Sicilians, calling the former *Σικελιῶται*, the latter *Σικελοί*.

to Aristeeas, one of the two officers of his court, deputed with this object to Jerusalem. It was believed by Josephus, and by Philo, and by Justin Martyr, who repeat it with minute and marvellous additions, such as that all translated apart, and that on comparison their versions were found to be precisely the same. But the whole story is now justly discredited by most of those who have examined it; and it is the received opinion, that the Pentateuch was translated by the Jews of Alexandria, for the purpose of being read in the Synagogue, and that the version is called the Septuagint, not from the number of the translators, but from that of the members of the Sanhedrim that authorized its use. Still, as no such sanction is recorded, the name might be derived from the popular story, which was believed till modern times. The other books followed at different periods; and the diversity of style and the inequality of execution prove that they were translated by different persons. The Pentateuch and Proverbs are most approved: the Psalms and Prophets, especially Isaiah, were executed by those who were unequal to the undertaking<sup>b</sup>; and the version of Daniel was so full of errors, that it was rejected by the Church for that of Theodotion. The critical importance of the Septuagint is variously estimated, and difficult to ascertain. It often differs from the original, and in many passages so materially, that it cannot be regarded as a translation of the Received Text. That text, however, we know was revised some centuries after the Christian æra; and we have no means of determining the merits of the MSS. from which it was corrected. But whatever change might then have been introduced, it will not explain all its differences, as many of them existed when

<sup>b</sup> Ἰωσεδὲκ ἐν τοῖς προφήταις, Jeremiah xxiii. 6. is a remarkable instance, which is left as a proper name untranslated, and which it requires some knowledge of Hebrew to discover, means, *The Lord our Righteousness*, a defect greatly to be regretted, since it deprives the reader of the Prophet's attestation to two leading tenets of Christianity.

Origen undertook to bring the text nearer to the Hebrew, as it was in his time. It represents the Samaritan Pentateuch more closely than the Hebrew, and, like the former, greatly lengthens the chronology, which is accomplished in such a manner as shows that there must have been an intentional alteration, either in the original, or in the version. It seems to be certain, that it must have been translated from MSS. without the vowel points; but this will not account for all its various readings, which often require a change also of consonants. The Epistle to the Hebrews exhibits a remarkable specimen of both. Jacob (xi. 21.) worshipped, leaning on the *top of his staff*, for *bed's head*; and, (x. 5.) *a body thou hast prepared me*, for *mine ears thou hast opened*, the first produced by a change of vowels, but the latter requiring a substitution of other words. The authority of an inspired Apostle would be, of course, decisive; but it may be urged, that he cited the text as he found it, because sufficiently accurate for his purpose; and at the utmost it is only a few passages that can thus be restored on authority.

It is also difficult to discover in what edition we shall find the real Septuagint; for so greatly do the celebrated Alexandrian and Vatican MSS. vary, that it is conjectured that the former represents the text as Origen revised it, and the latter as he found it. The attempt of that Father to correct the text has only increased our perplexity. He collated all the MSS. he could procure; and devoted twenty-eight years to his great work, which he called Hexapla, because he arranged it in six columns, exhibiting the Hebrew text first in its own and then in Greek characters, the Septuagint, and the three other versions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus; the first two made in the second century, the last probably in the third. His object was not, as might have been wished, the restoration, but the improvement, of the version, by rendering it more conformable to the original.



He informs us, that he marked with a spit, ὀβελός, what was not in the Hebrew, but in the Septuagint; and with an asterisk what was not in the Septuagint, but in the Hebrew, and supplied it from the other translations, chiefly that of Theodotion. The work itself has perished, with the exception of a few fragments, but his text became the received Bible. As such it was continually copied; but in the course of time his marks were so often omitted or misplaced, that his object was in a great degree frustrated; and though Eusebius, about A.D. 300, reedited it from the original, then extant at Cæsarea, it must soon have been again corrupted; for Jerome complains that the Septuagint could not be found as originally translated. A short time before, Lucian of Antioch and Hesychius of Alexandria corrected the original Septuagint from the Hebrew, and while Origen's text was read in Palestine, the use of the former prevailed in Syria, and that of the latter in Egypt; so that, according to Jerome, the world was divided between the three. To these Recensions and the original Septuagint we may refer the extant MSS. and the principal editions. That of the Complutensian and Antwerp Polyglotts, 1515 and 1571, is supposed to represent the Hexaplar text; the Aldine, 1518, comes nearer to the original Septuagint; and the Roman, 1587, from the Vatican MS., still closer. The Alexandrian MS. was published by Grabe at London, 1707; but all are superseded by the critical edition at the Press of the University of Oxford, undertaken by Dr. Holmes, and completed by Mr. Parsons, in which we have a complete collection of various readings, not only from MSS. and versions, but also from the quotations of the Fathers.

There is also another defect in this version, not arising from ignorance, but superstition. It is well known, that the modern Jews never presume to pronounce Jehovah, the name which the Deity has appropriated to Himself, but always

substitute for it Lord. Luther and our translators have gone farther, writing instead of Jehovah, Lord, except in a very few instances, though ours have endeavoured to obviate the obscurity that ensues from the practice, by printing it in capitals when it stands for that sacred title, as, *the LORD [Jehovah] said unto my lord [Adoni]*. (Ps. cx. 1.) We find from the Septuagint, that the same superstition unhappily prevailed at the time of that translation, for like our Lord their *Kύγιος* is ambiguous, and may be used with propriety, of the Lord of all, and of any human being, who really is, or is in courtesy, considered by the speaker as his lord or superior. From the Septuagint, *Kύγιος* was transferred to the New Testament; which is the more to be regretted, because though in the quotations from the Prophets it is easy to restore the name of Jehovah when it is applied to Jesus, there are original passages, in which we may reasonably suppose, though in consequence of this we cannot prove, that divinity is predicated of the Saviour. Happily, however, the declarations to that effect are so numerous and so diversified, that more are not needed by any careful enquirer, though they may be overlooked by the hasty reader. Upon the whole, whatever may be the defects or imperfections of the Septuagint, though it can no longer claim to be inspired, still we have reason to be thankful for it, and may observe that with all its variations and imperfections, a version previous to the Christian æra, which only occasionally differs from the Hebrew, and exhibits the same leading prophecies of the Messiah as the original before His advent, is the strongest guarantee that the Jews, to whom *were committed the oracles of God*, (Romans iii. 1.) were faithful to their trust.

Having superseded the original in the synagogues of the foreign Jews, it is cited both by Philo and Josephus; and as none of the Christian Fathers, except Origen and Jerome,

were acquainted with Hebrew, it became the Bible of the Church. Such it still remains in the East, though of course now only intelligible to the very few who have learnt the ancient tongue, while in the West the original took its place in the translation of St. Jerome, called the Vulgate. Its adoption by the Church ruined its reputation with the Jews, who substituted for it the more literal version of Aquila, A.D. 130, a proselyte from Christianity, and are said to have instituted a yearly fast, in order to curse this translation, in honour of which their ancestors in the time of Philo were accustomed to keep a feast. It was familiar to the writers of the New Testament, and to many of those for whom they wrote; and as they wrote in Greek, it was natural that they should make use of this translation, which was then probably regarded much in the same light as the authorized version is with us now; but they did not adhere to it without exception. The subject has been fully examined, both by our own and foreign critics; and the result has been exhibited by Horne, who, after transcribing all the quotations in the New Testament from the Old, thus sums it up. "As their quotations now correspond with the Hebrew very frequently in express words, and generally in the sense, so it is highly probable that they uniformly agreed at first; and that where the Hebrew was properly expressed in the Greek version, they used the words of that version; but where it materially varied, they either gave the sense of the passage cited in their own words, or took as much of the Septuagint as suited their purpose, introducing the requisite alterations. Hence several passages are direct quotations from neither. All this accords with what ordinary writers in similar circumstances would have done; but the sacred penmen, being themselves inspired, might take liberties which we must not, because their comments are equally the word of God with the text commented on."

It is clear from this statement, that the theologian ought to be well acquainted with the Septuagint; but the influence it has had on the style of the New Testament supplies a still more forcible argument for the study of it. This Hellenistic Greek, in which both are written, is, as has been observed, entitled to the denomination of a peculiar idiom; and not only conveys Hebrew phrases in Greek words, but even uses single Greek words in senses in which they never occur in classical writers<sup>c</sup>. This difference in idiom constitutes a difficulty much harder to be surmounted than that of dialect, as it does not affect the form but the meaning of words<sup>d</sup>.

<sup>c</sup> For example, we should turn in vain over the classics, or recur to the roots *ἀγίης* and *δικη*, to ascertain the full import of *ἀγιασμός* and *δικαιοσύνη*, which can only be learnt by examining the Hebrew *Kadesh* and *Tzedak*, which they represent in the Septuagint. Thus also *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, which is a vice in the classics, becomes in the New Testament a virtue; nor can it be justly affirmed, as it is by some, that the word expresses the same disposition of mind, and that the difference is in the judgment formed concerning it; for it is comprised under *μικροψυχία*, *pusillanimity*, by Aristotle, *Περὶ ἀρετῶν καὶ κακίῶν*, and contrasted with *μεγαλοψυχία*, *magnanimity*; and to evince that the corresponding Latin term *humilitas*, in heathen authors, has the same meaning, we have the authority of Cicero. “*Succumbere doloribus eosque humili animo imbecilloque ferre miserum est.*” *De Finibus*, l. to which he opposes, “*Robustus animus et excelsus, liber cura et angore.*” In conformity, however, with the style of the Italic translation, this word has been made the sign of the Christian virtue, humility, which Castalio, careful of the purity of his Latinity in his version of the Bible, always renders by *modestia*. To those who would enter more fully into the subject, I recommend the chapter on the Septuagint in Ernesti’s *Institutes*, from which I extract the following observations. Whatever Greek word corresponded etymologically to a Hebrew word, or expressed its primary signification, was employed by the translators also for all the tropical significations, and that in a way irreconcilable with the usages of Greek. Thus *ῥῆμα* is made to represent *Dabar* in its double sense of *word* and *thing*. Secondly, when Hebrew words have many different meanings which cannot well be explained by tropical transference, nor derived from the primary signification, the corresponding Greek words are used with the same latitude; thus as *Nathan* is either *to give* or *to place*, *τίθεναι* and *δίδοναι* are used indifferently to convey the same idea. John x. 11, 17.

<sup>d</sup> The Hebraisms of the New Testament are numerous. I will mention two which are continually recurring. Adjectives in Hebrew are few, and for them two nominatives or a nominative noun with a genitive are substituted. As

Blackwall, and others, have laboured to vindicate the purity of the New Testament Greek<sup>e</sup>. Their industry has been successful in several instances, for, after a laborious investigation, solecisms have been explained away, by the production of similar phrases in the most approved classical authors. Yet upon the whole the truth of the remark remains unimpaired, for the general homeliness of the diction has been owned both by Origen<sup>f</sup> and by Chrysostom, who were far more competent judges of such a question than any modern can be, since not only was Greek their native tongue, but they were famous for eloquence, especially the latter, who has been called the Christian Demosthenes, and is indebted to it for his surname Golden-mouthed, which has nearly superseded his baptismal name, John. Still the New Testament contains fewer Hebrew grammatical constructions than the Septuagint, except in the book of Revelation, and a large proportion of the phrases and constructions is Greek, of the same degree of purity as that spoken in Macedonia, and in which Polybius wrote his history. Many authors, who have devoted their time to the study of Greek, have collected from the classics all the expressions, that can in any way illustrate the style of the New Testament, and Lexicons have been drawn up for the same purpose, none of which can be compared with that of Schleusner, who has arranged in alphabetical order the most important remarks of preceding critics. It is to be feared, however, that, like many German theolo-

Grace and Truth, for the true grace; (John i.) Lord of glory, for glorious lord; and bond of perfectness, for a perfect bond. All the former are, I believe, retained in our version, but the latter are generally rendered according to the English idiom; as unrighteous steward, instead of steward of unrighteousness.

<sup>e</sup> The Sacred Classics defended and illustrated.

<sup>f</sup> "Lest we should make ourselves ridiculous arguing thus with Grecians, for our dispute is with them, let us accuse the Apostles of being illiterate, for this accusation is an encomium." *Hom. iii. in 1 Cor. i.* Origen goes still farther, "The Apostles, not ignorant of their defects, profess themselves to be of the vulgar in speech, but not in knowledge." *Philocalia iv.*

gians, he did not believe in all the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, and therefore his own explanations of the words that bear upon them must be read with caution<sup>g</sup>.

Cicero<sup>h</sup> informs us, that the Greek philosophers were of opinion, that if Jupiter were to speak Greek, he would use the language of Plato. If any enquire, why, on the contrary, the true God chose to communicate His will in an idiom which they would have despised as barbarous; we reply, that the New Testament was written not to excite the admiration of the few, but the conversion of the many, and that this idiom would be far more generally understood, and especially by the Jews to whom the Gospel was first preached. Hence too the important conclusion follows, that the conviction which was the consequence of divine truth, could not be attributed to human eloquence. And this very fact, which to critics of fastidious taste has been a stumbling-block, is an intrinsic and irresistible evidence of the authenticity of the New Testament, since it is such in respect of style as could only have been written by Jews, and hardly even by Jews, such as Philo and Josephus, superior in rank and education to the disciples of our Lord. It may be added, which greatly strengthens this argument, that we find under this homely garb, the most exalted sentiments, the most convincing reasoning, the purest morality, and the sublimest doctrines, far beyond their own powers of mind to originate<sup>i</sup>.

Still homeliness may be overstated; for the language, though inelegant in the estimation of a Greek, is not a jargon, formed by persons who, speaking different tongues, borrow words from all, throwing off grammatical inflec-

<sup>g</sup> Examples of this are given by Bishop Jebb, in his *Sacred Literature*.

<sup>h</sup> *De Claris Oratoribus*, 31.

<sup>i</sup> This Section is principally abridged from one of Dr. Campbell's *Dissertations*.

tions, but has rules of its own; and St. Paul's Epistles abundantly show, that this dialect is as capable as that of Demosthenes of being rendered eloquent, in the estimation of those who value ideas more than the terms in which they are clothed. The remark too must be limited to our Lord's followers; for we should recollect, that His own discourses are translated into it, and that He spoke in Syriac, in which we have no reason to conclude that He expressed Himself less elegantly than other teachers. There is no intimation of the imperfection of them as uttered even in this subordinate point; and as it is said, (John vii. 45.) that *never man spake like this man*; and that (Luke iv. 22.) the people wondered at *His gracious words*; though the Evangelists had chiefly in view the matter, we need not altogether exclude from their consideration the manner. And certainly in their literal translations we have the thoughts that breathe conveyed in unidiomatic, and what Greeks might term barbarous phrases. Allowing that we have not our Lord's actual words, we may maintain that His parables and allegories are inimitable in expression as well as in substance; that His figures are most appropriate; and that the style is throughout poetical. Nor should this, which has been always more or less characteristic of oriental teachers, surprise us, when we recollect that the sublime and pathetic diction of the Psalmist and the Prophets had been the study of His youth. It is easy to trace in his speeches a strong resemblance to their writings, not only in images and expressions, but in the very structure of the composition. Since the time of Bishop Lowth, the poetical portions of the Old Testament have been often printed as such, but it was reserved for Bishop Jebb to extend it to the New. His theory is, I conceive, substantially correct; and I only wonder that he had not been anticipated by Lowth, because the hymns recorded by St. Luke are plainly written in the same style as the poetry of the Old Testament, and

the same system is exhibited in the intermediate Apocryphal books. It was therefore but a single step to extend it to the writings of the Apostles, and the discourses of our Lord: nor is it a sufficient objection, that portions of the latter are clearly prose; for the same may be proved of the ancient Prophets. If the poetic character does not so uniformly pervade them, though I do not know that this can be shown, it is no more than might be expected; for the Prophecies and Psalms are studied compositions, our Lord's speeches unpremeditated, and recorded not in the tongue in which they are spoken.

The theory when first mentioned is startling, but the reader's surprise will cease when he considers that Hebrew versification is not marked by rhyme or by quantity, and does not even resemble blank verse, but that its sole characteristic is *Parallelism*, that is, the repetition of an idea, reflected as it were back again in other terms; as

Seek ye Jehovah while He may be found,

Call ye upon Him while He is near. (Isaiah lv. 6.)

Occasionally the idea instead of being repeated, is contrasted with its contrary, as frequently in the Proverbs. Thus, *A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.* (x. 1.) A version so literal as our own sufficiently exhibits the system, but had our translators been aware of the fact, they might by a more careful choice of words have rendered it more apparent.

This Parallelism admits of much variety. The most frequent form, like the specimens I have cited, is confined to a couplet, sometimes it extends to four, six, and even more lines; it is often alternate, occasionally introverted: but under every combination it gives energy and precision to the meaning. For specimens, I refer to Lowth's *Isaiah*, and *Lectures on Hebrew Poetry*; Bishop Jebb's *Sacred Literature*, or Horne's *Abridged Statement*; and to the note below, only



observing<sup>c</sup>, that the system is most fully developed in the Psalms, some of which, as the cv, cvi, and the cxiv, it is no

<sup>c</sup> I have exhibited in the text the simplest and commonest form of parallelism. The second is enlarged to four verses.

The ox knoweth his owner,  
And the ass his master's crib :  
But Israel doth not know,  
My people doth not consider. (Isaiah i. 3.)

The third extends to six.

When it is evening, you say a calm ;  
For the sky is red.  
And in the morning, to-day a tempest ;  
For the sky is red and lowering.  
Hypocrites, the face of the sky ye know,  
But ye cannot discern the signs of the times. (Matt. xvi. 2, 3.)

As the fourth, I may mention the comparison of the two houses built on the sand and on the rock, with which the Sermon on the mount closes, each consisting of eight lines. (Matt. vii. 25.)

I reserve, for the last place, parallelisms of three and five lines as less complete, there being of necessity nothing to correspond with the odd line. As,

To the way of the Gentiles go not off,  
And to a city of the Samaritans go not in :  
But proceed rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. x. 5, 6.)

And, Who is wise, and will understand these things ;

Prudent, and will know them ?  
For right are the ways of Jehovah,  
And the just shall walk therein,  
And the disobedient shall fall therein. (Hosea xiv. 9.)

The parallelisms I have cited are regular, but the following are introverted. The first, condemning two acts of imprudence, in which the act dangerous to the individual is placed first and last, while that affecting only the truth itself is contained within the two intermediate lines.

Give not that which is holy to the dogs,  
Neither cast your pearl before the swine,  
Lest they trample them under their feet,  
And [these] turn about and rend you. (Matt. vii. 6.)

And the second, which is more complicated.

And it shall come to pass in that day,  
The great trumpet shall be blown,  
And they shall come who were ready to perish in the land of Assyria,  
And the outcasts in the land of Egypt,  
And shall worship Jehovah

In the holy mount at Jerusalem. (Is. xxvii. 13.)

In which the first and last lines, the second and fifth, and the third and fourth, respectively accord.

exaggeration to say, would be intelligible, though we omitted the second clause of each verse; as cxiv:

Judah was his sanctuary,

Israel His dominion.

The mountains skipped like rams,

The little hills like young sheep.

Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord;

At the presence of the God of Jacob.

This peculiarity must have been promoted by the practice of alternate singing; but it seems to have been coeval with the Hebrew tongue, as it prevails in the earliest specimens of its poetry, as Jacob's Blessing, and Balaam's Prophecy, and may be traced even beyond the Flood to Lamech's short speech to his wives.

So congenial is this parallelism to the Hebrew mind, that it even shows itself, independently of poetry, in passages which are evidently prose. Thus St. John, who retains more of the peculiarities of his nation than the other writers of the New Testament, strengthens whatever he affirms by denying the contrary, as he *confessed, and denied not*, (John i. 20.) and, (1 Ep. iv. 6.) *He that heareth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us*. And our Lord Himself often renders His meaning more emphatic, by giving two examples instead of one. For instance, (Matt. xi. 21.) contrasting the future state of a Jewish town, in which He had worked miracles with a heathen one, of ancient days, He not only opposes Chorazin to Tyre, but also Bethsaida to Sidon; He declares Himself at the same time to be greater than Jonah and Solomon; (Matt. xii. 40, 41.) He connects Pilate's slaughter of the Galileans, whose blood He intentionally mingled with their sacrifices, with the accidental fall of the tower of Siloam upon others; (Luke xiii. 4.) and in the same discourse, (Luke iv. 27.) refers both to the cure of Naaman the Syrian, and to the relief of the widow of Sarepta.

## SECTION VI.

*On the Versions of the New Testament.*

THE New Testament has been translated into the language of almost every nation that has been converted to Christianity. The ancient versions, especially the Syriac and the Latin, have a critical value, since they give us the sense of doubtful words, which we may presume prevailed while Greek was a living tongue; and being literally rendered from manuscripts of higher antiquity than any extant, they supply us with various readings, which are in some instances preferred to those of the present text. The first, which was made probably in the second century, is peculiarly interesting, since it is in the language spoken by our Lord, and therefore probably represents His words more accurately than the original; and the second, called the Vulgate, because generally received, deserves our study, as its author St. Jerome carefully collated the Greek manuscripts which were accessible to him, and it dates from the beginning of the fifth century. As its adoption by the Church was voluntary and gradual, and as the Italic, that is, the old Latin translation, continued long in use in many places, there is reason to believe that the two have been sometimes blended together; at least we now find in the Vulgate phrases which its author expressly condemns, so that the style is not uniform throughout. We must also remember, that fear of shocking the prejudices of the ignorant prevented his introducing every improvement that he thought desirable. The sense in many places is conveyed justly and perspicuously; in others we find barbarisms and solecisms, the cause of which it is not easy to discover<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> Thus the Greek *ἕνεκα*, which answers both to *quod* and *quia*, is almost always rendered by the latter, in defiance of sense and grammar; as thus, "Tunc confitebor illis *quia* nunquam novi vos;" but we may suppose that *quia* was then equivalent to *quod* in the ordinary speech, as *that* is to *because* in Scotland.

Upon the whole it may be pronounced to be a good and faithful version, and though not to be implicitly followed, it must be of great service to the critic; and being long anterior to the existing denominations of Christians, it has no bias in favour of any. Protestants are apt to be prejudiced against it, because it was declared to be authentic by the Council of Trent; but the real reason of the decision was, that the members of that Council knew that their opponents were preparing versions from the original, with which scarcely any of them were acquainted, and fearing that they might weaken the cause of Rome, interposed their authority in favour of the Bible already in use. Passages<sup>b</sup> from it certainly are adduced, favourable to the abuses which had crept into the Church, but there is no reason to suppose that they were so translated with any sinister design. The Douay Bible and the Rheims English Testament, published in opposition to the versions of the English Church, and other translations by Roman Catholics into their vernacular tongues, are from this text, which in consequence of the Trent decree has with them taken the place of the original. Being

<sup>b</sup> As the Angel's salutation to the Virgin, erroneously rendered instead of *highly favoured, full of grace* (plena gratiæ;) and the prediction, "*She* (ipsa) shall bruise thy head;" (Luke i. 28. Gen. iii. 15.) both of which afford some colour to the excessive and idolatrous honour paid to her by Roman Catholics; while the latter explains why painters have represented her trampling upon a serpent. Their best critics, however, consider (ipsa) *she* as the mistake of a transcriber, and refer to ancient manuscripts, which read *it* (ipsam). "Jacobus adoravit fastigium virgæ ejus," (Heb. xi. 21.) is quoted in support of the adoration of relics; προσκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ, "worshipped *leaning* upon the top of his staff;" a deviation from the original, that can only be explained by supposing that in the Latin MSS. the preposition was accidentally dropped. It renders μυστήριον, *sacramentum*, (Eph. v. 32.) and thereby has tended to exalt matrimony into a sacrament; but it appears from ecclesiastical writers, and other parts of this version, that this word was used for the moral or hidden meaning of an apologue; thus, (Rev. xvii. 7.) "Ego dicam tibi sacramentum mulieris." The same justification may be urged for "pœnitentiam agere," which, though translated *do penance*, in the Rhemish Testament, meant originally to *repent*.

in constant use during the middle ages, it has contributed to form the theological language of Europe, and has had an influence upon our own authorized version, particularly in what are called consecrated terms, which King James instructed his translators to retain, and which had been familiarized by use. From the same causes that affected the original, the Vulgate version in the lapse of ages was corrupted through the carelessness of transcribers; and notwithstanding the attempt of Alcuin, under the authority of Charlemagne, to restore it to its integrity, great variations continued to prevail. When the Council of Trent declared it to be authentic, it became necessary that this standard of appeal should be correct; and accordingly an edition of authority was issued from the Roman press, by the celebrated Pope Sixtus the Fifth, A.D. 1590, who is said to have himself revised the proofs. Still notwithstanding, it was soon ascertained to be so inaccurate, that his successor Clement VIII. suppressed it, and sent forth, 1592, another edition, which is the present Bible of the Church of Rome.

In modern times several Latin translations have been made both by Roman Catholics and Protestants, of which the only one I think it worth while to name is that of the celebrated Beza, which has been made the standard of most of the vernacular versions used by the Reformed Church, and has occasionally perverted certain doctrinal texts in our own. "It requires," says Campbell, "but very little of a critical eye to discover in him a constant and indeed an avowed effort to accommodate the language to his own theological views."

<sup>c</sup> We have a remarkable instance in Acts xiv. 23. bearing upon Church government; *Χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρους*: "Quumque ipsi per *suffragia* creassent presbyteros;" which the Vulgate renders rightly *constituissent*. Beza has been followed in this by the French Diodati, and by the Geneva English, but not by the authors of our version. They have, however, rendered with him, *ἐπέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις*, in the sermon on the mount, *by* instead of *to* the ancients; in which he is followed by almost all Protestant translators, though he confesses the other rendering to be more faithful; and they have translated after

Wickliffe, the morning-star of the Reformation, as he has been called, promoted that great work, not only by numerous tracts, but also by a translation of the whole Bible, which being from the Vulgate, is chiefly interesting as a specimen of our language, in its transition from Saxon to English. His New Testament was printed first by Lewis in 1731, and afterwards by Baber in 1810, and an edition of the whole, for which the MSS. extant have been carefully collated, is now passing through the press of the University of Oxford. The first translation from the Greek is that of the martyr Tyndale, who retired, for this purpose, to Antwerp; where, with the assistance of Fryth, and Roye a friar, both of whom afterwards suffered death as well as himself on a charge of heresy, the first at Smithfield, the second in Portugal, he finished the New Testament only four years after the printing of Luther's, which is the earliest from the original in any modern tongue<sup>d</sup>. Seven editions of it appeared, but all

him, in a sense more favourable to final perseverance than the original, Heb. x. 38. 'Ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐν πίστει ζήσεται καὶ ἂν ὑποστείληται: "The just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back:" although it is rightly rendered *he* in the earlier translations. He even renders πάντας, *quosvis*, instead of *omnes*, ὁ πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι, (1 Tim. ii. 4.) that he may do away the testimony of this text in favour of universal redemption: but in this our translators do not follow him. In candour it ought to be added, that for such variations he assigns his reasons in the notes, and as it is accompanied with the Vulgate and the Greek text, no reader can be misled.

<sup>d</sup> The following chronological list of translators may be found useful.

Erasmus, 1516. His version varies little from the Vulgate.

Luther, 1522.

Lefebvre's French Testament, 1523.

Tyndale, 1526.

Coverdale's English Bible, and Olivetan's French, 1535.

Cranmer's Bible, 1539.

Castalio's Latin Bible, 1551.

Geneva English Testament, 1557.

—— Bible, 1560.

Beza's Latin Testament, 1566.

The Bishops' Bible, 1568.

Junius and Tremellius Latin Bible, 1575.

abroad, before his martyrdom, 1536. In the opinion of Dr. Geddes, few first translations are preferable; and he observes, that it has not been surpassed in perspicuity and purity of style by any subsequent version. Tyndale also published the Pentateuch 1530, and Jonah 1531, and translated other books of the Old Testament; but to Coverdale was reserved the honour of editing the whole English Bible, which he completed, 1535. And in 1539, was published under Cranmer's patronage, what is commonly called the Great Bible, which appears to have been a revision of it. Several of our reformers, having been driven from England by Mary's persecution, published an English Testament at Geneva, 1557, and completed the Bible in 1560. In 1568, the Bible projected by Archbishop Parker was published. Portions of it, at least fifteen in number, were allotted to men of competent ability, and as eight of these were bishops, it goes by the name of the Bishops' Bible. This translation, which is the one quoted in the Homilies, was used in the Church for forty years, though the Geneva Bible on account of the notes was more read in private. In 1582, the Roman Catholics, finding it impossible to withhold the Scriptures any longer from the people, printed their Testament at Rheims. Objections having been made to the Bishops' Bible at the Hampton Court Conference, A. D. 1604, James I. gave orders for a new version. It was consigned to fifty-four persons; but some of these must have died, or declined to act, for the list, as given in Fuller's Church History, comprises only forty-seven names. They were divided into six classes. Ten were to meet at Westminster, and translate from Genesis to the second Book of

Rheims Testament, 1582.

Italian Bible.

Diodati, 1607.

The Douay Bible, 1609—1610.

The Authorized Version, 1611; being eighty-five years after Tyndale's.

Kings inclusive ; eight at Cambridge undertook the other Historical Books and the Hagiographa ; seven at Oxford were to translate the Prophets ; the Gospels, Acts, and Apocalypse were assigned to another company at Oxford of eight ; the Epistles were translated at Westminster by seven, and the Apocrypha at Cambridge. Properly speaking, it is not a new translation, but a revision ; and in limiting themselves to this office, these divines were faithful to their commission, for they were instructed to alter the Bishops' Bible as little as the original would permit, and to use Tyndale's and the other translations when they agreed better with it. It was another instruction, occasioned it is said by the king's dislike of the annotations of the Geneva Bible, that none should be affixed to this. The importance of this instruction could not be fully perceived at the time, but in our day we find in it abundant cause of gratitude to Him, whose Providence "disposeth as it seemeth best to His godly wisdom the hearts of kings," that the authorized version of the Church of England was unaccompanied with note or comment. I do not mean to underrate the value of such aids to the understanding of the sacred text, and happily they abound in our language ; but now we judge of their merit, instead of surrendering our judgment to them ; whereas if the best that could have been drawn up had been imposed as Articles of Faith, time would have detected in them errors, and we should have been placed in the painful dilemma of sacrificing our conviction of truth, or of opposing the authority of the Church. It was begun in 1607, and published in 1611. After this publication, the former versions fell gradually into disuse ; only the Psalms and the Canticles from Cranmer's Bible, 1539, are still retained in our Book of Common Prayer.

No translation bears a higher character than our own ; but though substantially accurate, it must, as an uninspired



work, have its faults. Its actual mistakes are few, but in many instances the full energy of an expression, and the precise shade of meaning, have not been conveyed. These cannot always be transfused into a version: but the imperfect knowledge of the translator is occasionally the cause, for the two centuries which have since passed have contributed much to a more critical understanding of the original tongue. These blemishes are not often in essential points, still they injure the effect; and Campbell has happily transferred to such corrections as modern criticism supplies, Spence's remarks upon the utility of his inquiries into the remains of ancient art for throwing light upon the classics. "The chief use I have found in this sort of study, has not been so much in discovering what was wholly unknown, as in strengthening and beautifying what was known before. When the day was so much overcast just now, you saw all the same objects that you do at present; these trees, that river, the forest on the left hand, and those spreading vales to the right; but now the sun is broke out, you see all of them more clearly, and with more pleasure. It shows scarce any thing you did not see before, but it gives new life and lustre to every thing you did see<sup>e</sup>."

The fluctuations to which language is liable, has rendered our version, in certain passages<sup>f</sup>, unintelligible to the un-

<sup>e</sup> Polymetis, Dialogue vi.

<sup>f</sup> Archbishop Newcome has entered fully into the subject in his *Historical View of English Biblical Translations*, Dublin, 1792. The following words may serve as specimens of the obsolete: "leasing," for *lies*; "daysman," for *umpire*; "carriage," for *baggage*; (Acts xxi. 15. 1 Sam. xvii. 22.) "oweth," for *owneth*; "to eschew," to *avoid*. Thus, "Take no thought," (*μεριμνάω*), means now, *be not anxious* 'Αναστροφή, *conversation*, which we limit to discourse, originally included conduct. And this change of meaning has enfeebled several passages, as this, *they falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ*, (1 Pet. iii. 16.) and rendered Paul's exhortation to Timothy, *Be an example in word and in conversation*, (1 Tim. iv. 12.) tautological. Lust and lewdness are now restricted to one particular vice, and usury is applied no longer to what is considered as the proper *interest* of money; meat and *food*, quick and *living*.

learned reader, and in others has altered the meaning, but for these the translators are of course not accountable. Their principal fault is the arbitrary rendering the same Greek word by different English ones. They avow in their preface, that they have not tied themselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, which was in their opinion to savour more of curiosity than wisdom; and we might have agreed with them, if they had only taken the liberty of varying in such words as they specify, as *pain* for *ache*, *joy* for *gladness*. Their inaccuracy in this respect has produced a greater diversity in the translation than exists in the original, and quite prevents the reader from observing peculiarities of style; as verses (for example, Mark ix. 40. and Luke ix. 50. and Matt. xxvi. 41. and Mark xiv. 38.) are respectively identical in Greek, which differ in English. In argumentative passages this varying is especially to be regretted, since it produces obscurity. For instance, in the fourth chapter of the Romans, ἐλογίσθη and λογίζεται, which occur so frequently, are rendered *counted*, *reckoned*, *imputed*. In St. John's Epistle, (v.) *record* and *witness* alternate, and *testament* and *covenant* in that to the Hebrews. (vii. viii.) Καταλλαγή, which is found only in the same Epistle, (v. 11.) they render *atonement*, while they translate in the verse preceding the verb κατηλλάγημεν, *reconciled*. To the modern reader, *we have received the atonement*, seems to be an improper expression; but when our version was made, atone-

faithless and *unbelieving*, have also ceased to be synonymous; and to *let*, (Rom. i. 13. 2 Thess. ii. 7.) and to *prevent*, have changed meanings. The use of *of*, for *by* and *from*, produces frequent ambiguity, as "they shall all be taught *of* God," (John vi. 45.) "A man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard *of* [παρὰ] God;" (John viii. 40.) and (Matt. ii. 15.) "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken *of* [*by*] the Lord *by* [*through*] the prophets;" showing in the original that it was the Lord who was the agent that inspired them. The same may be said of ἐν, which ought often to be rendered *by* or *to*, instead of *in*; as "to be glorified *by* [*in*] His saints," (1 Thess. i. 10.) and "it pleased God to reveal His Son [*in*] to me." (Gal. i. 16.)

ment, that is, the being at one mind, was still sometimes put for reconciliation. It would, however, have been better not to have used it here, because in the Old Testament these translators made it represent *ἱλασμός*, that is, *propitiation*. In consequence of this arbitrary variation<sup>g</sup>, many passages lose much of their beauty and perspicuity, and in some the sense is affected<sup>h</sup>. Occasionally they fall into the opposite

<sup>g</sup> These passages are a few instances out of many, in which uniformity of phrasing would have made the translation much more emphatic. *Διότι τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ φανερόν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς αὐτοῖς ἐφανερώσεται*, because that which may be known of God is *manifest* to them, for God hath *manifested* it, (Rom. i. 19.) "ἵνα διὰ τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως τῶν γραφῶν, τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχωμεν" ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως δόξῃ ὑμῖν τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖν, that through *patience* and the *comfort* of the Scriptures we might have *hope*. Now may the God of *patience* and *comfort* grant, &c. (Rom. xv. 4, 5.) 'Ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν, ὁ δὲ Θεὸς τῆς ἐλπίδος πληρώσει ὑμᾶς πάσης χαρᾶς καὶ εἰρήνης. (12, 13.) "In him shall the nations *hope*: Now may the God of *hope* fill you with all joy and peace in believing." Οὐχ ὅτι ἱκανοί ἐσμεν ἂν' ἑαυτῶν, λογίσασθαι τι, ὡς ἐξ ἑαυτῶν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἱκανότης ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, "Ὅς καὶ ἱκάνωσιν ἡμῶς διακόνους καινῆς διαθήκης. Not as if we were *able* of ourselves to reason at all as of ourselves, for our *ability* is of God, who has made us *able* ministers of the new covenant. (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.)

<sup>h</sup> Thus the eighth chapter of the Acts is so translated, as to countenance a belief in witchcraft. We read that Simon Magus *bewitched* the people of Samaria, and that he himself *wondered* at the miracles of Philip; though in the original it is the same verb that is used of both. *They take pleasure in, συνευδοκοῦσι*, (Rom. i. 32.) is softened down to, "He was *consenting* to his death;" (Acts viii. 1.) from the *consentiens* of the Vulgate when used of Paul, though faithfully rendered by Tyndale. *Κλέπτῃς* and *λῃστῆς*, *thief* and *robber*, are confounded in our version; the persons who attacked the traveller to Jericho were not thieves in the present sense of the word; and the malefactors, between whom our Lord was crucified, were robbers; for theft was not among the Jews a capital offence. A harshness and severity, not in the original, is given by the frequent use of the word *fool*, which is made to stand not for *μωρὸς* only, but for terms of a much milder import, as *ἄφρων*, *ἀνόητος*, *ἄσοφος*, *inconsiderate*, *thoughtless*, *unwise*. Many instructive distinctions, in the meaning of words nearly synonymous, will be observed, by examining Stephens's or Williams's Greek Concordance; and much valuable information on the subject will be collected from a perusal of Campbell's Introductory Dissertations. He distinguishes in his version between the outer and inner garment, *ἱμάτιον* and *χιτῶν*, rendering the first, *cloak*, the latter, *coat*. He translates *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι*, to *declare good news*, and *κηρύσσειν*, not "to *preach*," but to *proclaim the Gospel*, and *ὁμοιοπαθεῖς*, (Acts xiv. 15. James v. 17.) not "of like passions," but *of like nature*. *Μυστήριον* means "what is *secret*, not yet revealed," but *mystery*, what is incom-

error, by rendering two Greek words by one English, which does not answer to both<sup>i</sup>.

Our translators have certainly not made the use they might of our synonymes, but the rich variety of the original can never be fully communicated to our poorer tongue.

prehensible, and therefore cannot be revealed. *Σκληροκαρδία*, literally *hardness of heart*, does not mean inhumanity, but perverseness. With us the heart is made the seat of the feelings, but the ancients placed in it the intellect. Hence *reasoning*, (Mark ii. 7.) *thought*, (Acts viii. 22.) *comparison*, (Rom. x. 10.) and *reflection*, (Luke ii. 19.) are referred to it, and *cordatus* in Latin means *intelligent*. We may here notice the difference on this subject of figurative language in ancient and modern times. “Physici dicunt homines splene ridere, felle irasci, jecore amare corde sapere et pulmone jactari,” is the remark of Cornutus upon Persius; and to the same purport, it is said in the Testament of the twelve patriarchs, (supposed to be the work of a Christian of the first century,) that God made the heart for thought, the liver for passion, the gall for bitterness, the spleen for laughter. *Blasphemy* is confined to an offence against the Deity, but *βλασφημία* means *reviling* any one, even the evil spirit; (Jude 9.) our translators, therefore, have often rendered it *defaming* or *reviling*; it would have been better if they had so done in Matt. xii. 31. *All manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, &c.* and (1 Tim. i. 13.) where Paul says he had been a *blasphemer*.

<sup>i</sup> “*Ἄδης*, the place of departed spirits, and *Τίστινα*, the place of future punishment, are confounded under the common name of *hell*, except in 1 Cor. xv. 55; although almost all the foreign translators, except Luther, have preserved the distinction. And the evil spirits, *demons*, are rendered *devils*, though in the original the term is exclusively appropriated to their prince. But the most important words of this class are *μεταμελίσσμαι* and *μετανόω*, and their derivatives, which are both rendered to *repent*; but the first, as the etymology shows, means to *repent* or *grieve*, the second, to *change the purpose* or *reform*. In conformity with this statement, Phavorinus defines *μεταμέλεια*, [the noun does not occur in the New Testament,] “dissatisfaction with one’s self for what one has done;” and *μετάνοια*, “a change from worse to better.” The first accordingly, if genuine, will terminate in the latter. In some passages either translation would equally answer the purpose; in others the difference is essential, in none more than the Apostle’s declaration, “*Ἡ κατὰ Θεὸν λύπη μετάνοιαν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἀμεταμέλητον κατεργάζεται*,” (2 Cor. vii. 10.) which in the English version not only introduces an unsuitable play upon words, but makes him state an identical proposition; whereas if rendered as suggested, it contains an accurate definition of genuine repentance: *Godly sorrow produceth a reformation to salvation not to be repented of*. However, it must be owned, that these words are used promiscuously in the Septuagint, but the distinction is observed in the Syriac, and by Beza and Castalio, though not by Jerome.

I observe, as an example, that λέγω, ἔπω, φημί, φάσκω, φράζω, ῥέω, εἶρω, ἔρρω, all answer to the English word *say*; and yet an attentive perusal will show that they are not strictly equivalent. It has been observed, that in the sermon on the mount, the word in ordinary use is ἔπω, but what is reported as a tradition is signified by ῥέω, while λέγω is reserved for whatever our Lord authoritatively delivers as His command. In our version the three verbs in this sentence, Ἠκούσατε ὅτι Ἐρρήθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις, οὐ φονεύσεις, Ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὅσαν εἶπη τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ, are all represented by *say*, but in this instance, though not in all, our translators might have varied their expressions, for they might have rendered it, “ You have heard that it was spoken to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; but I tell you, that whoever shall say to his brother.”

The Greek language has four words, βρώσκω, ἐσθίω, τρώγω, φάγω, answering to the verb *to eat*, and no less than ten for the act of *seeing*. It is granted, that it is not always practicable to mark these shades of meaning; but it may be done frequently, as Campbell has shown, and when done, the sense is more perfectly exhibited. Thus θεωρεῖν has clearly a more extensive meaning than ἰδεῖν: for the enemies of our Lord *saw* Him as distinctly as His disciples; it cannot be, therefore, that whoever seeth the Son with his bodily eyes has eternal life; but it must be he that *contemplateth* or *observeth* the Son, that is, sees Him as the Son, acknowledging His nature, character, and offices. The same remark may be exemplified in nouns; we have for a *net*, δίκτυον, ἀμφίβληστρον, and σαγῆνη; and κόφινος and σπυρίς, for a *basket*; these are evidently of different dimensions, as the latter, which was capable of holding a man, (Acts ix. 25.) is the word used in the miracle of feeding the five thousand, (Matt. xv. 22.) while the former is appropriated to that of the four thousand. (Mark viii. 8.) We have παιδία and τέκνα, for *children*; and

ὁ πλησίον, γείτων, and περιουκός, for *neighbour*: φίλος and ἑταῖρος are both rendered *friend*, which in the proper sense belongs only to the first; the latter being merely a term of civility, which is addressed to the dissatisfied labourer in the vineyard, (Matt. xx. 13.) to the guest without a wedding garment, (xxii. 12.) and to Judas (xxvi. 59.) when betraying his Master.

In the English Testament, our Saviour is sometimes called Lord, and sometimes Master, and in our modern language they are equivalent; but the latter, Διδάσκαλος, properly answers to a teacher, the former to one who has authority over others, Κύριος, and is addressed both to men and to God. Καθηγητής, once employed by Matthew, (xxiii. 8.) and also rendered Master, ought to be rendered Leader; and Ἐπιστάτης, a word peculiar to Luke, likewise translated Master, is more accurately superintendent or ruler. Δεσπότης is a term of higher import than Κύριος. It is applied to Christ when it is the object of the writer to set forth His dignity, (as in 2 Pet. ii. 1. Jude iv. and Revelation vi. 10.) and would therefore be better rendered Sovereign.

The most serious defect, however, in the authorized version is, the frequent omission of the definite article, originating, I presume, from familiarity with the Vulgate, in which no attempt is ever made to supply the absence of it, which, in that as in all Latin works, is most unfavourable to accuracy. This omission has lowered the emphasis of many declarations; for instance, *You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am*, is not equivalent to, *You call Me the Master, and the Lord*; the former might be said of any teacher, the latter with propriety of Him alone. We may reasonably fear, that this inaccuracy has been very injurious, as it has not merely lowered the emphasis of single words, but has obscured the meaning of several passages. This, however, has not been its worst consequence, for it has

withdrawn from the unlearned the most decisive Scripture testimony to the Divinity of our Saviour, and confirmed the opinion of many, that though it may be suggested by various texts, it is rarely positively asserted. A reference to five passages in the Greek will show this to be a mistake, for the following verses in our version bring before us both the Father and the Son, the first as God, the second as Man; whereas in the original the Son only is mentioned, and His divinity is distinctly affirmed.

Ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, (Tit. ii. 13.) *looking for the glorious manifestation of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ, (Eph. v. 5.) *in the kingdom of Christ, who is God.*

Κατὰ χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ ὑμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, (2 Thess. i. 12.) *according to the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ Σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, (2 Peter i. 1.) *through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Καὶ μόνον δεσπότην [Θεόν] καὶ Κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀρνόμενοι, (Jude 4.) *and denying our only Sovereign [God]<sup>1</sup> and Lord Jesus Christ.*

If any can entertain a doubt of the accuracy of this criticism, it will be dispelled by a consideration of the passage in the Epistle to Titus, which speaks of a manifestation of the great God. Now no one *hath seen or can see the Father, who dwelleth in unapproachable light*; and we have the authority of the Greek writer Chrysostom for asserting, that this verse applies exclusively to the Son. This error is the more extraordinary, because our translators

<sup>1</sup> *God* is omitted in the Vulgate and in the Alexandrian MS.; but though we should drop it with Griesbach, yet the next verse shows that deity is ascribed to Jesus, and it seems to be included in the title Only Sovereign.

have correctly rendered the two following verses in which the article is found, in precisely the same connection with two nouns. 'Ο Θεὸς καὶ Πατὴρ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν, *The God and Father of our Lord*, (2 Cor. i. 3.) Τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ, (1 Cor. xv. 24.) *To God even the Father*. The passage in St. Peter is also rightly rendered both in the Bishops' Bible, and in the Rhemish Testament. Probably our translators were influenced by the authority of Erasmus. It is to be regretted, that in this instance they did not defer, as they often did, to Beza, who, long before Mr. Granville Sharp had established this canon of criticism, declared in his note upon the passage in Titus, that the genius of the Greek language requires, that where there is only one article and two nouns, the article should apply to both; and closes it with this practical conclusion, 'Christo igitur, ut vere magno et æterno Deo, ὁμοουσίῳ καὶ συναίδιῳ sit gloria et laus omnis in sæcula sæculorum.' Mr. Boyd, who has in many ways made his knowledge of Greek subserve the cause of Christianity, shows, in a valuable Essay appended to Dr. Clarke's Commentary on the Epistle to Ephesians, by numerous examples, that this idiom is not confined to the New Testament or to the Fathers, but prevails in those authors, who are allowed to have written in the utmost purity, both in verse and prose<sup>k</sup>. And the fact is also established by Dr. Wordsworth, and Bp. Middleton.

As I have enlarged upon the imperfections of the authorized version, I think it necessary to add, that they are often exaggerated, and that its general merit and its equality, at least, with those of other countries, has been strenuously maintained from its first appearance down to our own times, by persons who are competent to judge. "It is incomparably superior to any thing which might be expected in the present

<sup>k</sup> I refer to Bishop Middleton's treatise on the Greek Article, for a full discussion of its meaning.



age," says Bishop Middleton; "as to composition, it is simple, it is harmonious, it is energetic, and, which is of no small importance, use has made it familiar, and time has rendered it sacred." The best proof of its excellence, as observed by Whitaker, in his critical examination of Mr. Bellamy's hardy and arrogant assertions, is, "that it has been used, since its first appearance, by the Dissenters as well as by the Church, and has been esteemed by all for its general faithfulness, and the severe beauty of its language." To conclude, in the words of Scott, "During nearly two hundred years our translation has been extant, and persons of various descriptions have made new translations of the whole, or particular parts; and scarcely any writer on these subjects fails to mention alterations which he supposes to be improvements. It may then be asked, How can unlearned persons know that the authorized version may be depended on? Let the inquirer, however, remember, that Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Calvinists, and Arminians, who maintain eager controversies with each other, all appeal to the same version, and in no matters of consequence object to it; and, in fact, if all different readings, and all their alterations, were adopted, the rule of duty and the articles of faith would continue the same they now are."

## SECTION VII.

*On the Geography of the Holy Land, and its political state  
at the coming of our Saviour.*

WE naturally associate with remarkable events their locality, and the imagination forms a picture of the spot, which we wish to correct from the original. Who, though but imperfectly acquainted with the poetry and history of antiquity, has not longed at times to ascend the Acropolis of the city of Minerva, or to wander among the ruins of the ancient capital of the world? But what are the emotions of admiration which Athens or Rome can awaken in the minds of comparatively few, to the sentiments of reverence and gratitude which must touch the hearts of all believers, when they meditate on that hallowed land,

“ Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,  
Which eighteen hundred years ago were nailed  
For our advantage on the bitter cross!”

This feeling, no doubt, from the very commencement of Christianity, led many a true devoted pilgrim “to measure kingdoms with his feeble steps;” and as superstition superseded, or at least alloyed, pure and rational religion, the idea of merit connected itself more and more with that of gratification. An increasing multitude in consequence from all parts of Christendom strayed to seek “in Golgotha Him dead who lives in heaven,” and on their return they enumerated to their friends the various places which had been shown them as the scenes of the events of their Saviour’s life. We Protestants have ceased to regard such pilgrimages as meritorious; but Palestine, from its indissoluble associations with our religion, is still frequented by our travellers. They may be less devout, they are certainly less credulous, than their

predecessors; and no doubt the minute accuracy, with which even the houses of almost all who are mentioned in the New Testament are pointed out, is calculated in an enquiring age to provoke suspicion. Men are apt to pass from one extreme to another; and Dr. Clarke, in his anxiety to avoid credulity, falls, I conceive, into an unreasonable scepticism, when he doubts, that the church which the mother of the first Christian emperor erected on Calvary, three centuries after the crucifixion, really covered the Holy Sepulchre. Allowing the primitive Christians to feel like ourselves, how could they lose the knowledge of the spot, or neglect to transmit it to their posterity? And if Helena was not misled, and her informers could have no motive for preferring one quarter of the city to another, the tomb within the church which she erected is really that of our Lord, for it has ever since been venerated as His both by Christians and Mahometans. Even the spite of the heathen was instrumental in preserving a remembrance of the spot, for where Hadrian rebuilt Jerusalem under the name of *Ælia Capitolina*, a statue of Venus was set up on the site of the Crucifixion. I think, then, that though Clarke's opinion is powerfully supported by the editor of the Pictorial Bible and others, and it may be difficult to confute their objections, we may depend upon this appropriation as correct; and as no traveller has expressed a doubt respecting the spot shown as our Saviour's birth-place, the cave of Bethlehem, the two most interesting places may be assumed as ascertained; and whatever changes the country has undergone in the lapse of ages, the most sceptical traveller must allow, that there is enough to recal his Scripture reminiscences in the imperishable monuments of nature. The temple has disappeared, but the *everlasting hills still stand around Jerusalem*, as in the days of the Psalmist; (cxxxv. 2.) and no one can call in question the position of the Mount of Olives, or doubt that the torrent

that in winter flows in the vale below is the Kedron. Capernaum, Chorazin, and the neighbouring towns, have been so completely, according to our Lord's prediction, *brought down to hell*, that their sites are doubtful; but the lake itself, from which He so often taught, and on which He walked, is unchanged by time, and the Jordan still rolls its consecrated waters into the bituminous lake which covered in so remote an age the plain of Sodom and Gomorrah. We feel a deeper interest in Palestine than in any other country, and the many travellers who have published their observations on it, enable us to satisfy our curiosity. To some, however, of those for whom this book is chiefly designed, they may be unknown, and therefore I insert a brief outline of its geography. Some knowledge of the subject is not only agreeable but necessary, for our Saviour during His whole ministry was seldom stationary, but moving from town to town, and there are parts of the New Testament which without it are obscure; as, for example, the observation that *Jesus must needs pass through Samaria*, which is obvious to those alone who know that it lay between Galilee and Judæa, and that He could thus only visit the latter, without a long circuit beyond the river.

This Holy Land, as it is called both by Jews and Christians, extends about two hundred miles in length, and eighty in breadth in the middle, and ten or fifteen more or less where it widens or contracts, supposing the Jordan to be its limit. It is described in the Old Testament as lying between Dan and Beersheba, cities on its northern and southern extremity. Two parallel ranges of mountains, Libanus and Anti-Libanus, high enough to have their summits covered with perpetual snow, stretch from Sidon to near Damascus, and form the northern boundary. The southern limit is called in the Bible, the river of Egypt, not meaning the Nile, but an obscure stream, supposed to be the Sichor,

(Josh. xiii. 3. Jerem. ii. 18.) on the frontier of that country near Gaza, about sixty miles south of Jerusalem. The western boundary is the Mediterranean Sea, the eastern is less definite; for though Canaan, which the Israelites were commanded to subdue, was bounded by the Jordan, the promise to Abraham included all the country west of the Euphrates. To that extent it was only possessed by David and Solomon, and much of the further part of it must have been always desert. Still we know, that two tribes and a half, by their own desire, established themselves beyond the Jordan, because they had much cattle; and the beautiful and fertile region which they occupied appears, from the report of modern travellers, to have justified their choice. It has only been explored in our own age, and has been overlooked by many, who thus reduce to still more contracted dimensions the limited territory of Palestine. The Jordan, the only river that deserves the name, for the other streams are little more than winter torrents, is a peculiar feature in the physical geography of the country. It is called Jor Dan, that is, the river Dan, from that city, in a cave near which it first appears. But we learn from Josephus, that its true source is a small lake, called from its shape the Bowl, *Phiala*, at the foot of the eastern ridge of Anti-Libanus, whence it passes under ground, till it emerges from the cave. It then flows due south for about a hundred miles, expanding first into the waters of Meroer, mentioned in the Old Testament, and then into the much larger one of Galilee, whence after a rapid course it rolls into the Dead Sea, a volume of water, from two to three hundred feet in width, with a current so violent, that an expert swimmer will hardly find it practicable to cross it. Here it is now lost: the travels of Burckhardt and Laborde had rendered it probable, that, previous to that convulsion of nature which converted the plain of Sodom into a lake,

it found its way to the Ælanitic gulph of the Red Sea, as was presumed from the appearance of a deep valley, from four to eight miles broad, which may be traced through the whole intermediate desert, and has the appearance of the ancient bed of a river. Later observers maintain, that a range of hills crosses this valley near the termination of the lake, and that its level is much lower than that of the sea. This supposition, therefore, must be abandoned, unless we have recourse to a subsidence of the lake by some violent convulsion. Be this as it may, the valley seems to have been traversed by the Israelites on their way to Moab, and to have been the route by which the treasures of Ophir were transported from Ezion-gaber to the storehouses of Solomon. The magnificent sepulchral excavations of Petra *in the clefts of the rocks* lately discovered in the immediate vicinity still attest, that under the early Roman emperors this ancient capital of the territory of Esau, continued to be enriched by the commerce of the east, though the prediction that *it shall be a desolation, and that no man shall abide there*, has been long literally fulfilled. (Jeremiah xlix. 10—22.) The two lakes deserve a more minute description. The first, the lake, or, to use the Hebrew idiom, the sea of Galilee, on the shores of which our Saviour chiefly lived, is about sixteen miles in length and six in breadth; and is called by St. John the Sea of Tiberias, from a celebrated city near its lower extremity. “Its broad surface,” observes Dr. Clarke, “covering the bottom of a profound valley, environed by lofty and precipitous eminences, added to the impression of a certain reverential awe under which every Christian pilgrim approaches it, gives it a character of dignity unparalleled by any similar scenery.” He describes it as finer than any of the English lakes, but as inferior to Loch Lomond. “The barren aspect of the mountains, and the total absence of wood,” says Buckingham, “give a cast of

dulness to the picture, and this is increased to melancholy by the dead calm of its waters, and the silence which reigns throughout its whole extent, where, though it still abounds with fish, not a boat is now to be seen." A strong current through it marks the passage of the river, and when this is opposed by contrary winds which blow with the force of a hurricane from the south-west, sweeping into the lake from the mountains, a boisterous sea is instantly raised ; such as led the Apostles to exclaim, *Lord, save us, we perish!* The towns honoured by our Lord's presence have vanished, and, except the miserable remains of Tiberias, there is not a hut upon its coasts. The second lake, which greatly exceeds it in dimensions, being more than seventy miles long, derives its modern name, the Dead Sea, from the popular but erroneous opinion, that fish cannot live in it ; for shells are found on its shore. In the Old Testament it was called the Salt Sea, and by the Romans Asphaltites, from the bitumen with which it abounds. Its water is perfectly transparent, yet salter and heavier than that of the ocean, and, containing no less than a fourth of its weight of mineral ingredients, is of such a specific gravity, as will enable a man to float on it without motion. The air, loaded by evaporation with sulphureous vapours, is said to be injurious to vegetation : the coast is rocky and barren, there is no population to break the solemn silence that has reigned for ages on its lonely surface, and from the quality of its water it is not frequented by beasts or birds. When Lot lifted up his eyes, he beheld instead of it, *a plain well watered every where* ; and the comparison of it by Moses to the land of Egypt seems to imply, that the Jordan then flowed through it, like the Nile. The enormous sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, and three other cities of this plain, brought down upon them *swift destruction from the Lord*, who set them forth as an example of His just judgment to all future sinners. Modern

travellers assure us, that the neighbouring country is volcanic; and it is highly probable, that this awful visitation of God, who generally effects His purposes by secondary causes, was produced in part by the agency of subterranean fire. In confirmation of this supposition, we may cite the comparison in Deut. xxix. 23. *all the land brimstone, and salt, and burning, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.* Josephus (Bell. Jud. IV. viii. 4.) reports, that in his time there were still remains of that divine fire; and Henderson, in his Account of Iceland, cites passages from the Prophets<sup>a</sup>, which seem to show that their imagery is frequently drawn from volcanic eruptions.

The face of Palestine is mountainous, but there are some considerable plains, three of which deserve notice: 1. that of the sea, extending from the river of Egypt to the promontory of Carmel, being the land of the Philistines; 2. the region round about Jordan, on each side of the river, between the lakes; and, 3. the great plain of Jezreel, or of Esdraelon, the Armageddon of the Apocalypse, which runs from Carmel to the place where the Jordan issues from the sea of Tiberias. This central and fertile part of the land has been the scene of many a memorable contest. Here Barak descending from Mount Tabor discomfited Sisera; here fell Josiah; and here, to use the energetic language of Clarke, “from the days of Nebuchadnezzar, till the march of Buonaparte into Syria, warriors out of every nation have pitched their tents, and have had their various banners wet with the dews of Tabor and Hermon.” The copious dews, and the early and latter, that is, the autumn and spring, rains, the importance of which is so often expressed in the Scriptures, (Deut.

<sup>a</sup> Thus Nahum, describing the majesty of God, says, *the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence; His fury is poured out like fire.* (i. 5, 6.) And Jeremiah, (li. 25.) *Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain. I will roll thee down from the rocks, and make thee a burnt mountain.*



xi. 14. Prov. xvi. 15. Jer. iii. 3. Hosea vi. 3. Joel ii. 23. Zech. x. 1.) combined to render it what Moses (Deut. viii. 7—9.) called it, *a good land, a land of brooks, and waters of fountains, and depths that spring out of vallies and hills, a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates, a land wherein they should eat bread without scarceness, and not lack any thing in it.* Its productiveness, so strikingly pourtrayed in these words and in other passages in the Old Testament, is confirmed by the testimony of Josephus, (iii. 3.) by heathen authors, as Tacitus, (Hist. v. 6.) and by modern travellers. Our Saviour, in the parable of the sower, suited doubtless to the then state of the country, speaks of a return of sixty and even a hundred fold; (Matt. xiii. 8.) and the latter we know at an earlier period repaid the labour of the patriarch Isaac. (Gen. xxvi. 12.) Such being the capability of the soil, its present state under a weak and oppressive administration, which affords no security to property, is not, as infidels have urged, contradictory to the Bible statement, that *God hath given it of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.* (Gen. xxvii. 28.) On the contrary, its diminished population and produce confirm it; for, in the event of the Israelites breaking the covenant, these judgments were prophesied against them; and their accomplishment is a standing comment upon the Psalmist's declaration, (cvii. 34.) that *He turneth a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* Under a wise and beneficent government, writes Clarke, the produce of the Holy Land would exceed all calculation; the fault, therefore, as far as the complaint of barrenness is true, rests not with the land, but the people. The complaint, however, is exaggerated. The impression made on travellers will much depend on the season in which they travel; and the remark should be confined to Judæa; for Buckingham observes, (p. 500.) that while there, the

hills are as bare as imagination could paint them, and a few of the narrow vallies only are fertile; in Samaria the very summits of the mountains are as well clothed as their sides, and the country beyond the river he describes as of extraordinary richness, with extensive plains, not yielding in natural fertility to those of Zabulon and Esdraelon.

This Land of Promise, so called, because promised by God to Abraham, when taken possession of by Joshua four centuries after, was portioned by lot in twelve shares to the tribes of Israel. That of Levi, which had the honour of having for its share the service of Jehovah, was maintained by tithes, first-fruits, and sacrifices, and had no landed property, except forty-eight cities for residence, dispersed among its brethren; but its place was supplied by one of the sons of Joseph, for both of these were counted as tribes; since their father had been adopted instead of Reuben, who by his crime of incest had forfeited the double portion which was the privilege of primogeniture. Half one of these tribes, Manasseh, and those of Reuben and Gad, were settled, according to their own desire, east of Jordan; the others ranked in the following order, from north to south; Naphtali, Ashur, Zebulun, Issachar, the other half of Manasseh, Ephraim, Dan, Benjamin, Judah, and Simeon.

On the return of Benjamin and Judah from Babylon, (for the tribes which formed the kingdom of Israel have never been restored as a nation, some families of them only joining these two,) they settled in the southern extremity of Palestine, including the original allotment of Simeon, as well as their own. To this territory the name of Judæa is in the strictest sense appropriated, though generally used of the whole. The northern and more extensive division was called Galilee; and the intermediate country derived its name of Samaria from the ancient capital of the ten tribes. All beyond the river was sometimes called, from its situation, Peræa, and

thus made to include Ituræa, Trachonitis, Abylene, and Decapolis ; but Josephus restricts it to the southern portion, the lots of Reuben and Gad. The names of few towns are mentioned in the New Testament, and none of those in Peræa ; but we learn from Josephus, that the place where the Baptist was beheaded was Machærus, a fort near the Dead Sea, erected to check the incursions of the Arabs.

Isaiah (ix. 2.) had foretold, that Galilee should be the chief scene of our Saviour's miracles ; and we know, that it was the province most honoured by His presence. He had been brought there from Egypt, and had lived there till the commencement of His ministry, so that His birth at Bethlehem had been forgotten, and He was taken by all for a Galilean. Here He chiefly taught, and here He summoned His Apostles, who were all Galilæans, after His resurrection to meet Him. Josephus, who was the contemporary of St. Paul, describes Galilee as containing above two hundred towns, the least of which had 15,000 inhabitants ; and states, that he raised in it an army of no less than 100,000 men. Little reliance, I apprehend, can be placed upon his numbers ; still, however exaggerated his statements may be, we may fairly conclude from them, that this province was in our Saviour's time very populous ; and we are led to draw the same conclusion from the incidental notices in the Gospels of the multitudes that attended on His preaching. It was probably in part on this account, that He preferred it to Jerusalem. Here also He was out of the power of the priests ; and the lake of Gennesaret enabled him readily to pass, when expedient, from the dominions of Herod to those of his brother Philip. Josephus divides Galilee into Upper and Lower ; the former of which, from its large heathen population, was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*. In the former, Dan, sometimes called Paneas from the neighbouring mountain, lying on the road between Sidon and Damascus, was the principal

city. It had been enlarged and beautified by Philip the Tetrarch, who called it Cæsarea, as a compliment to Tiberius; and his own name was subjoined, to distinguish it from the more celebrated Cæsarea, dedicated with heathen ceremonies to his predecessor by its founder Herod the Great. In Lower Galilee, the towns mentioned in the New Testament are the following: Tiberias, built near some hot springs towards the southern end of the lake by Herod the Tetrarch, who named it after the Emperor, which, on the destruction of Jerusalem, increased in importance, as the Rabbis retired there, and it continued to be for centuries the chief seat of their learning. Nazareth, where Jesus was brought up, and called in consequence a Nazarene, stands near abrupt precipices, over one of which the inhabitants, when enraged by His discourse in their synagogue, attempted to cast Him headlong. (Luke iv. 29.) Bethsaida, the original residence of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, was raised into a city by the Tetrarch Philip, and denominated Julia, in honour of the daughter of Augustus, the wife of Tiberius. Capernaum, where Jesus paid the tribute-money for Himself and Peter, may be considered more than any other place as His home. But the sites of these and other towns in the vicinity which He frequented, have not been ascertained. Joppa the original port being neither safe nor commodious, Strato's Tower, thirty miles to the north, was improved by Herod the Great, who threw out a mole, within which a fleet might always ride, and called it Cæsarea. It became his residence, and afterwards that of the Roman Governor, who only went up to Jerusalem at the great feasts, and it is therefore to be regarded as the real capital of Palestine. It is memorable for the conversion of Cornelius, the first fruits of the Gentiles, who being called a centurion of the Italian band, was, it may be presumed, one of the guard of honour of the representative of the Emperor. It was during the crusades a place of importance, but now the surrounding country is a

sandy desert; and not a living creature, except beasts of prey, are found within many miles of it. Its ruins have long been resorted to as a quarry, whenever building materials were wanted at Acre, which succeeded it as a port, and is the maritime key of the country.

Samaria, built on the hill of Shemer, preserved the name of the original proprietor, from whom the site had been purchased by Omri, and continued to be the capital of the kingdom of Israel till its fall. It was rebuilt under Alexander the Great, and having been again destroyed by Hyrcanus, was restored by Herod, who fortified it, and in compliment to Augustus called it Sebaste, a Greek title, equivalent to the Latin Augusta. It appears to be the city of the Samaritans which received the Gospel from Philip. The name of Samaria extended from the town to this central region of Palestine, but the inhabitants were regarded by the Jews as aliens; for their ancestors, though intermixed with the remains of the ten tribes, were descended from various eastern nations, which had been transplanted as a colony on their removal, and had retained their idolatry, till *the Lord sent lions among them*. In their distress they had recourse to their sovereign the king of Assyria, who sent back to them *one of the priests, whom they had carried away, to teach them the manner of the God of the land*. (2 Kings xvii.) They in consequence worshipped Jehovah, but not with *the honour due unto His name*, for they continued also for a while to serve their idols. This idolatry they in time abjured, but their religious knowledge must have been most imperfect, since our Lord informed the Samaritan woman that they knew not what they worshipped. They wished to pass for the descendants of Ephraim; and on the return of Judah and Benjamin from their captivity, proposed to join them in rebuilding the Temple. Their proposal was rejected, and they had sufficient interest at the Persian court to suspend the work for a season.

Such was the origin of the mutual hatred of the Jews and the Samaritans, and in the time of Alexander the Great, new offence was given, by the erection on Mount Gerizim of a rival temple, by Manasseh, son of the Jewish high priest, who retired there because he refused to repudiate his Samaritan wife. The Book of Ecclesiasticus shows that this antipathy then prevailed; for its author, though he recommends so strongly piety and virtue, closes it with a declaration, that there are three nations whom his soul abhors, and one of them, whom he declares to be in reality not a nation, is *the foolish people that dwell at Sichem*. The Gospels supply instances of this mutual abhorrence, as the speech of the woman at the well, and their inhospitality to Jesus on another occasion. Idolatry, malice, and indeed every vice, is connected with the Jewish notion of this people; and they even altered the name of their city Sichem, calling it Sychar, because the latter means drunkenness. When our Lord had so exasperated His enemies that they were ready to stone Him, the first reproach that their fury vented itself in was, *Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil*; and the feeling is clearly shown by the Evangelist's explanatory remark, that the Jews *have no friendly dealings with the Samaritans*. Their temple had been demolished above a century before the Christian æra; but more fortunate in their obscurity than their enemies, whose altar has been thrown down for more than eighteen hundred years, they still offer sacrifice on the mountain on which it stood; at the foot of which the woman of Samaria told our Lord, *her fathers had said that it was the place where men ought to worship*. Here yet resided in 1840 about a hundred and fifty-three individuals<sup>b</sup>, I believe the only remains of this ancient people, and their worship is conducted by an hereditary high priest, who, through Manasseh, the builder of the Temple, claims to be descended

<sup>b</sup> Elliott's Travels in Syria.

from Aaron. Their profession of faith, drawn up by their then high priest Eleazar at the desire of Scaliger, and their subsequent letters to their brethren whom they supposed to be settled in Europe, show that they continue to hate the Jews, and differ from them in some of their customs and ceremonies, but principally in rejecting their traditions. They even acknowledge no prophet after Moses, and receive as Scripture only the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges, which they write in a peculiar character, which is generally supposed to be the original one, rejected by the Jews for that of their conquerors. Their Pentateuch is esteemed of the highest critical value ; for as it is substantially the same with that of the Jews, and as the enmity between the two nations prevented the probability of its being a transcript in later times, our external evidence for the text is carried higher than the date of the Greek translation, at least up to the captivity, probably even to the revolt of the ten tribes from Rehoboam. In its variations from the Hebrew and in its chronology, it nearly accords with the Septuagint. Sychar, or Shechem, still exists under the appellation of Naplous, a corruption of Neapolis, that is, the new town, so called as succeeding Samaria as the capital. Jacob's well, being dug out of the rock, is even now identified a little beyond the town, where the narrow valley expands into a fertile field, which might be the land which the Patriarch took with his sword and his bow from the Amorite, and bequeathed to Joseph, whose bones were there deposited. Gerizim and Ebal, the mountains which enclose it like walls, were distinguished in the annals of Israel. On each was stationed a deputation from six of the tribes, on the one to bless, and on the other to curse, the nation as they kept or broke the Law. Upon one of them, sacrifices had been offered, and stones erected, exhibiting a transcript of the Law, or some portions of it, as Moses had commanded ; but upon which is still in dispute.

The Hebrew Pentateuch reads Ebal, the Samaritan, Gerizim; Kennicot decides in favour of the latter, and probability confirms his decision; for it is natural to think that the Samaritans, who had the choice of both, would prefer the mountain of blessing for the site of their temple. This command, and the recollection that it was at Shechem that Abraham erected the first altar to Jehovah, explain why the Samaritans should suppose that this was the spot selected by the Almighty. The fertility of the plain gave it an advantage over the mountains of Jerusalem; and Shiloh in the vicinity may be regarded as the original metropolis, for it was in that central spot that Joshua made the distribution of the land, and set up the tabernacle. The height of Jerusalem, 1500 feet above the sea, gives it a more agreeable temperature, but it was probably chosen by David as his capital from his birth in the neighbourhood, and the strength of its position made up for other deficiencies.

In Judæa, exclusive of the capital and the small places in its immediate vicinity, Bethphage, Bethany, and Ennmaus, which on account of its natural hot baths became afterwards a place of importance, the New Testament mentions Ephraim, Bethlehem, and Jericho. Ephraim, eight miles to the north of Jerusalem, was the retreat of Jesus, after He had provoked His enemies by raising Lazarus from the grave. Bethlehem, His birth-place, only six miles distant, is pleasantly situated on an eminence in a fertile soil, which proper cultivation would render, what its name imports, a place abounding in food. Jericho, the first city taken from the Canaanites, was razed to the ground by Joshua, who denounced the extinction of the family of him who should presume to rebuild it. The prediction was fulfilled in the reign of Ahab, but the town flourished as the seat of the schools of the prophets, and in the time of our Saviour it yielded only to Jerusalem in size and magnificence, though it is now a wretched village. It was



situated in the great plain at the distance of twenty miles, and the road to it was much infested by robbers, a fact which is impressed upon our memory by the benevolence of the good Samaritan. Hebron, twenty miles to the south, is not named, but it is supposed to be the city in the hill country which was the residence of Zacharias, and was one of those belonging to the Levites. It is memorable as the place near which Abraham entertained the angels, and where he and his wife, his son and his grandson Jacob, were buried. It was the seat of David's kingdom, till he had taken Jerusalem from the Jebusites.

That city has been ever since, under Jewish, Roman, Christian, and Mahometan sovereigns, the most important in Palestine, and, it may be added, the most interesting in the world, being regarded as holy by the three great religious divisions of mankind. By the followers of the false prophet it is esteemed second only to Mecca, their place of pilgrimage, and at the commencement of his career he had even given it the preference. The Jews retire to it from all parts, that they may be interred within its sacred soil; and it is endeared to Christians, as the temporary burying-place of their Lord. The Mount of Olives, where He wept over its approaching ruin, and where Titus, its destined destroyer, encamped, being higher than the city, commands a complete view of it. Some of the trees which give it a name still grow there, but the general aspect around is blighted, and the bare rock appears through the scanty sward. A few gardens remain on the sloping base of Mount Zion, and a grove of aged olive trees in the valley below is supposed to mark the site of the garden of Gethsemane. As seen from this mount, modern Jerusalem has an imposing appearance; but on entering it, the illusion vanishes: there are no squares, the streets are narrow, the buildings mean; and it may be truly said, as in the complaint of Jeremiah, (Lam. i. 6.) *From the daughter of Zion*

*all her beauty is departed.* Yet we are informed by some who have seen it, that the houses are substantially built of stone, and that it is not inferior in its appearance to Smyrna and other Asiatic cities. Dr. Richardson, who had better opportunities of judging than most of our modern travellers, estimated the population in 1818 at 20,000, and it seems to have been increasing since his time; but when our Saviour lived, we may presume that it was considerably more populous. Josephus allows nearly five miles for the circumference of its walls; it is at present less than three, and the site is not precisely the same, for our Saviour suffered without the gates; but when Christianity triumphed over Paganism, the population gathered round this venerated spot, which became the centre of the modern city, while Mount Zion is almost entirely excluded, and under partial cultivation. It was called Golgotha, the place of a skull, it is supposed from its shape; but to the Christians of the West, who derive their theological terms from the Latin version of the Scriptures, it is known under the name of Calvary. It is described not as a distinct hill, but as a moderate projection from the lower slope, with the rock rising considerably above it on the north and west. Few towns have undergone greater changes, and the minute description of Josephus is not very intelligible; still, as Gibbon observes, the natural landmarks cannot be mistaken or removed<sup>c</sup>. It covered the oblong area of two limestone hills of steep ascent on every side but the north. The highest of these, Mount Zion, contained the city of David; the other, Moriah, was the site of the Temple; a third, Mount Acra, had been levelled under the Maccabæan Princes. Jerusalem was inclosed within an amphitheatre of eminences of more commanding elevation, parted from them by three vallies, the shallow one of the Rephaim, the wider one of Jehoshaphat, and the deep ravine of Gehenna, so called from

<sup>c</sup> Decline and Fall, iv. 23.

the son of Hinnom. There the Israelites used to make their children pass through the fire to Moloch; and as their shrieks were drowned by the sound of drums, it was also called Tophet, from the Hebrew name of that instrument. A fire was afterwards kept burning in it, to consume the filth of the city, and this rendered it an appropriate image of the unquenchable fire of hell. It opens into the valley of Jehoshaphat, the favourite burying place of the Jews, which is watered during the winter months by the brook Kedron, and is presumed by Mahometans and some interpreters of Joel iii. 2. to be the destined scene of final judgment. Two Mosques, the principal one erected on the conquest of Jerusalem by the Khalif Omar, occupy the site of the Temple, within which once stood the *House of prayer for all nations*; and it is peculiarly painful to the Israelite, that he is excluded from the spot on which his ancestor erected the temple, by the followers of the false Prophet, who boast of his own descent from Abraham through Hagar. This Mosque, according to Dr. Clarke, excels in magnificence all in the Turkish dominions, but he could only judge from the exterior; for neither Jew nor Christian are permitted to enter the sacred area. We have, however, descriptions of the interior both from Ali Bey and from Richardson; the former visiting it in the disguise of a Mahometan, the latter, with a dispensation from the governor. The area inclosed is a square of half a mile, within which must have been all the buildings of the Temple. This was in our Saviour's time, as it had been for ages, the great ornament and glory of Jerusalem; and as the spot chosen by God Himself for His dwelling among men, it is more interesting to the believer in revealed religion than any other edifice. It is desirable that the Christian should form a correct idea of it, as in the Epistles, particularly those to the Ephesians and the Hebrews, the doctrines of our holy faith are expressed in terms hor-

rowed from that building and its religious services. Happily Josephus, who had often worshipped within its courts, has given so minute a description, that we are better acquainted with it, than with any other of the celebrated buildings of antiquity, which like this have perished, without leaving a vestige.

It is a peculiarity of the Mosaic dispensation, that Sacrifice, the most important religious act, could only be performed on the single spot where it should please the Almighty to set His name, after He had given His people possession of the promised land. They were not, however, required to wait for that event, as Moses had been instructed on Mount Sinai how to form a proper dwellingplace for Jehovah, who condescended to be their King as well as God; and as they were to be for years a wandering people living in tents, this His palace as well as sanctuary was of necessity of the like character. In the Pentateuch (Exodus xxv—xxvii.) we have the details of its construction, of the curtains that were to protect it from the weather, and of the skreen that was to inclose it; and Moses not only received verbal instructions, but had a pattern shown him. It might be reasonably inferred, that such full instructions from God Himself must have some important end in view; and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who quotes the admonition, *see that thou make all things according to the pattern*, shows that the sanctuary, the priest, and the offering, were shadows of heavenly ordinances. The Tabernacle was an oblong square, divided by a veil of embroidered linen, which typified the human nature of our Redeemer, and separated the outward sanctuary from the inner, which represented Heaven. The latter the high priest alone was allowed to enter, but not in his pontifical dress, and only on the day of atonement, when, as the representative of Jesus, he brought in the blood of the sacrifices. In the outward sanctuary were the altar of

incense, a table upon which were placed twelve loaves according to the number of the tribes, and a golden lamp with seven lights. In the inner, distinguished as the Holy of Holies, was the Ark, a small wooden gilt chest, with a cover of solid gold, called the propitiatory or mercy seat, because the High Priest sprinkled it twice with blood to make atonement for his own sins, and then for the people's. Two carved figures, the Cherubim, who overshadowed it with their wings, seem to denote angels stooping down to look into the mystery of Redemption. Here the Divine Presence, or Shekinah, rested visibly in a cloud, and hence issued the oracular answer. God is therefore addressed as dwelling between the cherubim. The chest was called the Ark of the Covenant, because it contained the tables on which the Decalogue was inscribed. There were deposited in it also a pot of manna, as a specimen of the food from Heaven with which the Israelites had been sustained in the wilderness; and Aaron's rod, which budded as a sign that the priesthood was established by divine command in his family. The Tabernacle, being so constructed as to be taken to pieces, removed with the Israelites from encampment to encampment, till on the conquest of Canaan it was pitched in Shiloh, twenty-five miles from Jerusalem, and here the Ark remained till it was presumptuously brought into the field by the sons of Eli; and God was pleased to punish His people, by delivering it into the hands of their enemies. The Philistines, who had suffered severely for keeping it, restored it of their own accord, when it was placed at Kirjath-jearim, and afterwards brought by David with much solemnity to Jerusalem. The king after God's own heart was preparing materials for erecting a permanent mansion for its reception; but this honour was by a divine command reserved for his son and successor Solomon, a man of peace. The building was on the same plan as the moveable tabernacle, but on a larger scale: it was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar when

Jerusalem was taken ; and the true God remained without a Temple, in which He could be worshipped in the manner He had been pleased to appoint, till it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, after the return from the captivity.

The aged men who had worshipped in the first Temple lamented, when they saw the foundations of the second laid ; for they regretted the irrecoverable loss of the Ark, and the absence of the Shekinah. To encourage them, Haggai prophesied, that *the glory of this latter house should be greater than of the former*, (ii. 9.) a prediction fulfilled, though not with observation, when the *Lord, the Messenger of the Covenant, suddenly came to His Temple*. (Malachi iii. 1.) The Jew, who considers that this House has been long destroyed, and that no other temple but a mosque now occupies its place must acknowledge the impossibility of its literal accomplishment by any future Messiah ; while the Christian is satisfied with the interpretation, because, though the temple was rebuilt after five centuries by Herod the Great, as it was not taken down at once, but gradually restored, it has always been considered as the same building. He employed upon it several thousand workmen for nine years ; yet the Jews still continued to adorn it, and to enlarge it with additional buildings, so that they were justified in asserting, that it had been forty-six years in building ; nor was it completed till the government of the successor of Festus, not long before its destruction. It occupied the highest ground in the city, but was itself commanded by the tower Antonia, which Herod had erected, and named after his original patron Mark Antony. This communicated with the temple, and was occupied by a Roman garrison, and is the castle out of which the chief captain and soldiers issued to rescue St. Paul from the populace. (Acts xxi.)

The different nature of our religious worship and that of the Israelites, has occasioned an equal difference in the

places appropriated to that purpose. Where the service consists in prayer and exhortation, a capacious building must be provided for the congregation: where sacrifice is the principal act, an altar is most conveniently placed in the open air; and the building, which is merely the symbolical residence of the Deity, which the laity have no need to enter, and from which they were by the Mosaic ritual excluded, may be of small dimensions. None, therefore, of the religious edifices of the ancients (for the principle is as applicable to heathen temples, as to that of the true God) will bear any comparison in extent to our larger cathedrals. As soon as the primitive Christians were able to provide themselves with places of public worship, the model upon which they built was not the Temple, but the *Basilica*, or court of justice; and hence that name is still given to the seven more distinguished of the ancient churches of Rome, erected by the first Christian emperors. The Ναός, or Temple, properly so called, was ninety feet long, by thirty wide, into which our Saviour, not being a *priest after the order of Aaron*, (Heb. vii. 11.) never entered; but it stood within an Ἱερόν, or sacred inclosure, in which He and other worshippers attended; and this is a distinction carefully preserved by the Evangelists, though seldom retained by any translators, and altogether disregarded by our own. The consecrated area was a rocky eminence, and the side of the valley opposite the mount of Olives was lined by a stupendous wall 450 feet high, of blocks of white stone of a prodigious magnitude. Some of them, we learn from Josephus, (Ant. xv. 11.) were not less than forty-five cubits in length; the disciples therefore, pointing them out to their Lord, might well say, *See what very<sup>a</sup> large stones are here.* (Mark xiii. 1.) The outer inclosure was entered through nine entrances, one of which of Corinthian brass, higher and more magnificent

<sup>a</sup> ποταποί, what manner of stones, A. T.

than the rest, is supposed to be *the beautiful Gate*. (Acts iii. 2.) This was the court of the Gentiles, who were not permitted to proceed beyond it; and was surrounded by colonnades, one of which was called the Porch of Solomon, because it stood upon the terrace which he had raised from the valley in order to enlarge the area; and our latest travellers think, that this substructure partially remains. Josephus calls it the royal portico, and he says that no one could look down from its flat roof without being seized with dizziness. The south-east corner of it is supposed to be the "Pinnacle," or rather wing, *πτερόγιον*, from which Satan tempted our Saviour to precipitate Himself. As the Jews did not worship in this outer court, they conceived that it might be used for secular purposes, and therefore allowed it to be frequented by the money changers, and sellers of cattle. It was parted from their own by a low stone wall, upon which were pillars, with the inscription, "Let no alien enter the holy place." This explains the metaphor in the Epistle to the Ephesians, (ii. 13.) by which St. Paul describes the union of Jewish and Gentile converts in one church, a mystery, or, as we ought to render it, a secret, which, as he observes, he was commissioned to reveal; *But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us*. The court of the Israelites was divided into two; in the outer one appropriated to the women was the treasury, where the people brought their voluntary offerings for the purchase of victims, and defraying the other expenses of the temple; in the inner the men worshipped. Again, within this was the court which the priests alone might enter, and here was the brazen altar on which they sacrificed. Magnificent as these courts with their buildings were, they were surpassed by the temple itself, which arose beyond the altar; and which, unlike most



churches in our own country, faced the west, as St. Peter's at Rome. From its elevation, it was visible at a distance; and it is described by Josephus as a snowy mountain, for it was built of the whitest stone, and being roofed with plates of gold, when the sun shone upon it was too dazzling for the eye to rest upon. Like the tabernacle, it was divided into two parts by a veil, which was rent in twain at the crucifixion, emblematically denoting, that that event abolished the distinction between worshippers, and that the privilege of the high priest of entering within the inner sanctuary, was now communicated to all believers, who through the Mediator's death have access by a *new and living way* to the Almighty upon His mercy-seat, (Heb. x. 20.) The furniture of the outer sanctuary was similar in the tabernacle and the temples, but the ark and other sacred contents of the Holy of Holies perished with the first Temple; and that of the second is described as empty, upon the authority of Pompey, the only pagan who ever presumed to enter it. Within the area were rooms for the Priests, the Sanhedrim, and other purposes; and it is supposed that in allusion to them our Lord said, *In My Father's house are many mansions.*

In ancient times, and among the heathen still, the most important part of religious worship was the offering a portion of the property of the worshipper, and that not only of the produce of the earth, but of animals. The first Sacrifice recorded is that offered by Cain and Abel. The former brought of the fruits of the earth, but this, which was no more than a mere acknowledgment of the bounty of the God of nature, such as the deist or uninstructed pagan might present, was rejected; while the lamb of the latter was accepted. Divines in general conclude, that the reason why it was accepted was, that in offering it, Abel confessed himself to be a sinner, and that as a sinner he did not presume to

worship, except through the shedding of the blood of that Lamb of God, which his offering prefigured. It is true that this is only a conclusion; but this act of worship is recorded not to explain the nature of sacrifice, but on account of its fatal result; and it appears from the context, that it had not been then first instituted. It is inferred, I conceive with the highest probability, that the coats of skin which Jehovah made for Adam and Eve, to supply effectually the place of the leaves with which they sought to cover their nakedness, were taken from animals, which He had instructed them to sacrifice to Him; for they were not permitted to use them, as we have been since Noah's time, for food. The Apostle to the Hebrews (xi. 4.) seems to set the question at rest, when he observes, that it was *by faith that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain*; for faith presupposes a previous command, and a belief in its efficacy, which could be learnt only from revelation; for it is hard to conceive, how on the principles of mere reason, if the doctrine of propitiation through a vicarious substitute be unknown, the putting to death of God's creatures could be conceived to be a method of obtaining His favour.

Even those who oppose this general belief, both of modern and ancient divines, must allow, that the Mosaic law was given by God; and it is more reasonable to suppose, that the bloody sacrifices which it appointed, and which were already in use among the Israelites, and after the example of Noah among all his descendants, wherever dispersed, were originally commanded by God, than an invention of man adopted by Him. Under Christianity, sacrifice is abolished; and the reason for its abolition seems to be, that though a divine, it was only a temporary, institution; and that as other types ceased when the antitype had come, so our great High Priest, by *one offering of Himself once for all*, superseded the sacrifices of bulls and goats. These then as well as the Priesthood of a

*carnal commandment*, I cannot imagine will be revived; and therefore conclude that all passages in the Prophets which imply the restoration of the Temple service, must be interpreted figuratively. Originally, as we learn from the history of the Patriarchs, the worshippers of Jehovah sacrificed wherever they settled; but upon the giving of the Law, this most solemn act of religion was restricted to one spot, that is, before the Ark, the symbolical Residence of the Deity, and this on the erection of the Temple, Jerusalem became. When therefore God in His providence, by the hands of the Romans, destroyed His own Temple, He signified, by rendering the worship which He had Himself commanded impossible, that its purpose had been completed, and that could only be answered *in the death of that Lamb, without blemish and without spot*, (1 Peter i. 19, 20.) *who verily was foreordained in the Divine decree before the foundation of the world.* Thus when the time was come that the Mosaic law should vanish away, the Jew, however willing, could no longer perform its most important ordinance; and the Christian had learnt, from the Epistle to the Hebrews, to understand, that his Master, by His one offering of Himself, had for ever perfected His people. There is therefore in the Christian Church neither sacrifice, nor priest, in the proper sense of the words, that is, one who, according to the Apostle's definition, *offers gifts and sacrifices*, (Heb. viii. 3.) for Christ Himself is the only *Priest*; and the clergy are elders or *presbyters*, (by abbreviation priests,) who preside not at the *altar*, for we have none, having no victim to offer, but at the Lord's *table*, to distribute the bread and wine, which commemorate His offering Himself upon the Cross. The whole body of believers, indeed, is called by St. Peter, (1 Ep. ii. 9.) a *royal priesthood*, but this is only in a figure, as appointed to show forth *His praises*; or, in the language of St. Paul, (Romans xii. 1.) *to present their bodies a living sacrifice*;

while He as a real Priest still performs in heaven for them the office of Intercessor.

The original Sacrifice, and the only one we read of before the giving of the law, was that called *Olah*, or Ascension, because, with the exception of the skin, it entirely ascended in flame, rendered in the Septuagint *Holocaust*, or whole burnt-offering. This was also among heathen nations, as well as in the family of Abraham, the ordinary worship. The victim must be a male, and the offerer laid his hands upon it, to indicate that he transferred to it his own iniquity; a libation was then poured upon it by the priest, the throat was cut through at a single stroke, and the blood, being caught in a vessel, was sprinkled about the altar, and poured out at the foot of it to make atonement. It was then seasoned with salt, and consumed. The heathen sacrificed various animals to their gods, according to their reputed character; but the Israelites were restricted to tame ones from their herds and folds, bulls, goats, and sheep. Such a system of worship is favourable of course to the rich; but the merciful Author of the Code considerably permitted the less wealthy members of the congregation to offer instead a turtle dove or pigeon; and that none might be excluded from worshipping by poverty, a *meat*, that is, a flour offering, either in the natural state or baked, might be substituted even for the birds. The Peace-offerings (*Shalem*) an original revelation to Moses, were offered either in gratitude for blessings received, or as a supplication for those that were desired. They were so called, because he that offered them regarded himself as thereby reconciled to God. In this instance also the offerer laid his hands upon the victim, because all worship should begin with a confession of sin, and atonement. The Peace-offerings were to be divided into three parts: the rump, the kidneys, and the interior fat were to be consumed upon the altar as the portion of Jehovah; the breast and

right shoulder, called heave and wave offerings, because heaved, that is, lifted up, and waved to and fro before the altar, to consecrate them, became the property of the priest as peace-maker; while the third was eaten by the offerer with his friends as a feast, to indicate the peace which he had attained. These sacrifices were voluntary; but there were others of a piacular nature presented to the Deity to deprecate His wrath, and which under certain circumstances were required. These are divided into Sin-offerings, *Khatah*; and Trespass-offerings, *Asham*. The former seem to have been appointed for such violations of the law from ignorance or heedlessness, especially in religious worship, as if committed presumptuously were punishable with death: the latter, for known deviations from the ceremonial law, and for sins against men; but the distinction between the two is now not known with certainty; though they could not essentially differ, because offered either on account of sin committed or duty omitted. The same parts of the victim were burnt as in the peace-offerings. The rest, when offered for the high priest or for the people, were also burnt without the camp; but if for an individual, they were eaten by the priest, who thus typically bore his iniquity.

Such were the occasional sacrifices of individuals; but there were others constantly offered at stated times for the nation. Every day at nine o'clock in the morning, and at three in the afternoon, a lamb was sacrificed as an holocaust, with an oblation of flour and a libation of wine, a priest at the same time offering incense on the golden altar within the temple, while the service was accompanied with the mental prayer of the congregation. The service was doubled on the sabbath; and on the feasts of the new moon, two bullocks, a ram, and seven lambs, were consumed, together with a kid for a sin-offering, to show that even the fulfilment of a divine commandment was insufficient to render worshippers ac-

ceptable, unless they acknowledged their sinfulness. The first day of Tisri, the seventh month of the ecclesiastical year, but the first of the civil, was therefore regarded as more holy than the others, and was distinguished by an additional offering, and kept like a sabbath by abstinence from servile work. It is called the Feast of Trumpets, because those instruments were then blown more frequently than on other sacred days. Such were the ordinary national feasts; but the Law established three more solemn ones of a week's duration each, which all the men were required to attend. Thousands, we know, continually came even from the remotest countries; still the attendance could never have been general at them all, even of Jews within the limits of the holy land. It was not compulsory, but left to individual discretion; and it must have been understood that a considerable latitude was allowed, as even our Lord, *made under the law*, and desirous of *fulfilling all righteousness*, did not feel Himself bound to be present at all that occurred during His ministry. These festivals were so contrived as to represent the Deity as the God both of nature and of grace, by combining a commemoration of temporal and spiritual blessings. Thus the first and greatest, the Feast of unleavened bread, which immediately succeeded the Passover, and was so called from their sole use of it during its continuance, to show the haste with which their ancestors departed out of Egypt, was marked on the second day, the day after the sabbath, by waving before the Lord the first sheaf in gratitude for the approaching harvest, accompanied with the significant burnt offering of a lamb without blemish, and the whole festival recalled to their mind their liberation from bondage. On the fiftieth day from this feast, called therefore Pentecost by the Hellenistic Jews, and in the Law the Feast of Weeks, because it followed after seven weeks, they celebrated the completion of the harvest, and at the same time the delivery of the Law from Mount Sinai. The

Feast of Tabernacles, so called from their dwelling while it lasted in booths on their house roofs, was a grateful acknowledgment of the termination of their wanderings in the desert, and their establishment in the promised land; while the Feast of Ingathering, which followed and so extended the rejoicings to eight days, was instituted as a thanksgiving for the fruits of the year, and especially of the vintage.

This commemoration of earthly blessings has not been prominently brought forward in the services of the Christian Church, but the two first of these festivals reappear in Easter and Whit-sunday, when we record the rising of the first fruits from the dead, the antitype of the first sheaf; and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, when *the Law went forth from Jerusalem*; and no doubt it was purposely designed that both should occur on the Christian Sabbath. We have no feast corresponding to that of Tabernacles, the antitype of which must be sought either in heaven, or our Lord's personal reign on earth. It was a season of greater rejoicing than the others, and the sacrifices were far more abundant. On each day of the other feasts, we find that they were to add to the daily usual offering only the same animals as on the new moons; but the feast of tabernacles began with as many as thirteen bulls, one it should seem for every tribe, and twice the number of rams and lambs, the former lessening each day till it was reduced to one. In the course of time new feasts were instituted, that of Purim or Lots, kept for two days, in commemoration of Esther's deliverance of the nation, and that of the Dedication of the Temple which lasted seven days, and was also called the Feast of lights, because accompanied with illuminations. It was appointed by Judas Maccabæus when he purified the temple from idols, and restored the worship of God; and we learn from our Lord's attendance on it, that He had no objection to religious services appointed by the State. The celebration of these were not like the three great feasts confined to Jerusalem. Religion was the primary, but not

the exclusive object of the former, for the first and last days only were sabbaths on which work was prohibited, and the intermediate ones were employed in trading and social entertainments, for the first fruits and second tithes were not to be eaten at home, but the produce of them was to be brought to Jerusalem to be converted into food, on which the proprietors were to feast with their friends, the poor, and the priests. As at the fairs of the middle ages, devotion, business, and pleasure were combined on these occasions; and they must have had the happiest tendency to produce a patriotic and friendly feeling among all who attended them. The ceremonial Law, we learn from an Apostle, was a burden that neither his contemporaries nor their fathers were able to bear; and we have reason to be thankful that it has not been imposed upon Christians. But we are mistaken if we suppose that it communicated a gloomy character to the Temple service. On the contrary, the tribes went up to Jerusalem at the feasts *to give thanks unto the name of the Lord*. (Ps. cxxii.) They were seasons of national enjoyment as well as devotion, and there was only a single fast, on which they were to take no food, and to *afflict their souls*. On this day of atonement, the high priest offered for the sins of the whole nation an expiation of the most extraordinary character, which, consisting of two goats, one sacrificed as a sin-offering, and the other dismissed into the wilderness after he had confessed over it their sins, prefigured most significantly what neither alone could have done, *the High Priest of our profession*, both dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification. The Jewish high priest, unlike our own, was then obliged to present for himself a sin-offering before he could enter, as he did on this day only, the Holy of Holies, and he twice entered, first to burn incense, and to touch the Mercy-seat with blood on his own account; and secondly, with the blood of the goat, for the purification of the people.

From this mode of worship, as familiar to the first Chris-



tians as it is strange to us, the Apostles often drew metaphors, the full force and beauty of which are lost upon the modern reader, unless he has paid some attention to the subject. Thus St. Paul exhorts the Romans (xii. 1.) to offer, in contradistinction to slain animals, *their own bodies, a living sacrifice*, which he calls a *rational<sup>b</sup> worship*. And he declares his readiness to die for the Philippians in sacrificial language, (ii. 17.) *If I be poured<sup>c</sup> forth, σπένδομαι, as a drink offering, I joy and rejoice with you all*. We too, when a man exposes himself to danger or loss for another, say, that he sacrifices himself, but it is without thinking of the origin and energy of the phrase.

All these sacrifices were of Divine appointment, but we cannot presume that they had any intrinsic value; and we learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, that the blood with which Moses purified the patterns of things in the heavens, was only efficacious as typical of that of the Lamb of God, (ix. 23.) The necessity of some more precious victim than bulls or goats is shown by the simple fact of the repetition of such offerings; for if really efficacious, they would, as the Apostle reasons, (Heb. x. 2.) have ceased to be offered, whereas their continuance proves them to be not the removal, but the remembrance, of sins. Such too as they were, they were limited in their application, for there were none for such presumptuous sins as adultery and murder. David therefore, when his conscience is awakened to a sense of his guilt, exclaims, (Ps. li. 16.) *Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it*. It was to a better sacrifice than any he could offer that he looked, when he says in the same Psalm, *purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*; (ver. 7.) and this consideration gives an emphasis to the affirmation, *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth*

<sup>b</sup> Reasonable service, A. T.

<sup>c</sup> If I be offered upon the sacrifice, A. T.

*us from all sin.* (1 John i. 7.) The typical nature of this mode of worship is thus expressed in the fortieth Psalm, as cited in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second,* (Heb. x. 9.) is the Apostle's comment; and, therefore, as Christ succeeded in the room of all the sacrifices, it is reasonable to consider Him as the antitype of them all; and all are in fact referred to Him in the Scriptures. Thus Isaiah (liii. 10.) predicts, that Jehovah shall *make His soul a trespass-offering*; and He is called by St. Paul (Eph. v. 2.) both a *peace-offering* and a *sin-offering*. As *our passover*, He delivers us from the bondage of sin, typified by that of Egypt; like the *scape-goat*, He bears away our guilt; and as the lamb daily offered, He is our burnt-sacrifice, that *taketh away the sins of the world*. But He is not only the Sacrifice, but also the Sacrificer, the Priest of whom Aaron is a faint and imperfect type, since *by His own blood He has obtained eternal Redemption*, and entered not for a season the Holy of Holies, but Heaven; there to remain for ever at the right hand of God, *a Priest upon His throne*, to plead the merits of His one sacrifice of Himself, and to make intercession.

A service of this description required numerous ministers. (Heb. x. 4.) It was originally the privilege of the first-born; but when it pleased the Almighty to separate to Himself a peculiar people, and to institute a particular form of worship, He set apart for His service the tribe of Levi. Its members were in consequence exempt from secular occupations and cares, and were maintained by tithes and first fruits, paid by the other tribes, and by their share of the offerings: but they only filled subordinate offices; as preparing sacrifices, and

acting as porters and singers, for they were a gift to Aaron and his sons, to whom they themselves paid tithes. In David's time they amounted to 38,000; of these he appointed 24,000 to the constant duty of the Temple, and they, as well as the priests, were divided into twenty-four courses, to officiate in turn: the others were distributed through the country as judges and officers. The priesthood was confined to Aaron and his sons, and the office was to be hereditary. As the Jewish priests were expected to marry, it is most extraordinary that the Church of Rome, which maintains that the clergy are priests in the original sense of the word, to offer continually the body of Christ, should in opposition as it were to the Mosaic law insist upon their celibacy. Under the Mosaic dispensation, there were *many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death.* (Heb. vii. 23.) Horne gives a catalogue of them, eighty-one in number from Aaron to Phannias, who was appointed in the year in which the Temple was destroyed. The office descended from Aaron to Eleazar, his eldest surviving son, in whose family it continued six generations, when it passed over, we know not for what reason, to Eli, who was of the house of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son. The removal of the office from his family was foretold to him as a judgment on him for his criminal forbearance towards his sons; and it was fulfilled when Solomon took it from Abiathar his descendant in the fourth generation, and conferred it upon Zadok of the elder branch, of which was Joshua, high priest on the return from Babylon. It was held by his descendants till the time of Judas Maccabæus, who conferred it on one Alchimus, to the exclusion of the right heir Onias, who retired to Heliopolis in Egypt, where he erected a rival temple. Jonathan, his brother, united it with the sovereignty, and setting aside Onias, he may be supposed to have had the best claim to the office, as being of the first of the twenty-four classes ap-

pointed by David. After the extinction of his family it might be considered as open to the whole priesthood: and Herod, and after him the Romans, nominated whom they pleased, with little regard to qualification. It was even sometimes sold to the highest bidder, and conferred and taken away at pleasure; and this explains the existence of more high priests than one at a time, that is, of men, who, having held the office for a season, retained the rank and title for life. Annas held it for six years, a longer period than any of his immediate predecessors, and when deposed, was succeeded by three of his sons, and by his son-in-law Caiaphas. The high priest had the supreme administration in religion, and ranked next to the sovereign, and the other priests performed the service of the Temple under his superintendence. As only four of their original courses returned from the captivity, these were again divided into twenty-four, which bore the names of those established by David; and this explains Luke's naming the course of Abia, though it appears to have remained in Babylon, (1 Chron. xxiv. Ezra ii. Nehemiah vii. xii.) To each order was assigned a president, supposed to be the chief priest mentioned in the New Testament, and by Josephus. The duty when we consider the multitude of sacrifices offered by individuals, as well as for the nation, must have been laborious, but it was divided among many, and each course served only for a week.

To the Temple it was the duty of all the men of Israel to repair at the three great festivals. Still the sabbath was sacred every where, and it was proper that then, and at other seasons, Jehovah should be worshipped every where by His people. Accordingly there were throughout the country, and wherever Jews were settled, and probably had been from their taking possession of Canaan, places whither they resorted to pray, and to hear the Scriptures read and expounded. These houses of prayer we call by the Greek

term Synagogues, or places of assembly, and they were opened for service on the Sabbath, Mondays, and Thursdays, and three times in the day, for devout Jews, after the example of David, (Ps. lv. 17.); and Daniel (vi. 10.) prayed thus often, either in public or at home. In the synagogue was a table upon which the Law was spread, and on the east side an Ark in which it was kept; and the seats nearest this being the most honourable, were those which the Pharisees were ambitious of occupying, (Matt. xxiii. 6.) The direction of the service was under the management of rulers, *Ἀρχισυνάγωγοι*, (Acts xiii. 15. Mark v. 22. John vi. 59.) who seem to have acted as judges in differences between the members of their congregations; and St. Paul is thought to allude to this custom, (1 Cor. vi. 9.) when he reproaches the Christians of Corinth with bringing their differences before Gentile tribunals, instead of appointing some of their own body to judge between the brethren. Our Saviour refers to their power of scourging, (Matt. x. 17.) which Paul five times experienced, (2 Cor. xi. 24.) The lessons at first were exclusively taken out of the Law, which was divided into as many sections as could be read through within the year. But when Antiochus Epiphanes forbid this upon pain of death, the Jews selected fifty-four portions out of the other books; and on his persecution ceasing, they resumed the reading of the Law, retaining the portions they had substituted. This practice still prevails among them in their dispersion, and probably suggested the introduction into our own service of a chapter both from the Old and the New Testament. They have at present a complicated liturgy, in which are interspersed the eighteen ancient prayers, to the repetition of which they are indispensably bound either in public or private<sup>a</sup>. They are ascribed to Ezra, but some were evidently

<sup>a</sup> They may be read in Prideaux's Connection, vol. i. p. 374. or in Horne's Introduction.

composed when there was neither temple nor sacrifice; and there is a nineteenth, said to have been written by Gamaliel a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, which is an imprecation of destruction on apostates and heretics, that is, Christians, and the kingdom of pride, meaning thereby the Roman empire.

It was in this holy land that it pleased Almighty Wisdom that the Saviour of mankind should be born, should pass His life, and should suffer the cruel and ignominious death of a malefactor. It occupied an intermediate station between the two grand divisions of the world, the Roman and Parthian empires, and was most favourably situated for communication with both. It was with a view to this most important of events, that more than nineteen centuries before, Abraham had been called from beyond the Euphrates to sojourn in it; and possession of it, which had been promised to himself and his immediate descendants, was granted after five centuries to his seed, then grown into a mighty nation. All that had access to the Scriptures might learn from them, that this was (John i. 11.) the peculiar country of the Son of God, which was designated by Isaiah (viii. 8.) as *Immanuel's land*; not only as the abode of His chosen people, but because He Himself, as this appellation, *God with us*, denotes, was there to become incarnate, as a descendant, through His mother, of its ancient sovereign David. There accordingly, in the fulness of time, He was born, as had been expressly foretold by Micah, (v. 2.) in the town of His royal ancestor. From the moment the first man became a sinner, this incarnation and its consequences became necessary to the restoration of the human race from guilt and misery, to the Divine image, and to the Divine favour; and as this fall had been foreseen and the remedy provided from the beginning, Christ is said *to have been slain* (that is, His sacrifice had been proposed and accepted) *before the foundation of the world, to be manifested*

*in due season.* That season, however, did not arrive till mankind had existed four thousand years, by which time the gross ignorance of religious truth and the profligacy that had all along prevailed among all heathen nations, had abundantly demonstrated the insufficiency of what is called the Light of Nature, and the necessity, which indeed the wisest of their authors had acknowledged, of a Revelation of the Divine will. Nor did the sins of the only people which enjoyed this advantage, less evince the need of a spiritual Deliverer; for if the Gentiles were perishing *for lack of knowledge*, the Israelites, who boasted of a law that was *holy, just, and good*, through breaking of that law were self-condemned, and dishonoured God. The *Consolation of Israel*, as Luke (ii. 24.) emphatically calls our Blessed Lord, had been held forth to the eye of faith from the beginning, in the whole ritual of their worship; the sacrifices and purifications of which were to the spiritually minded, a prophetic anticipated Gospel<sup>b</sup>; intimating most

<sup>b</sup> The details of sacrifices and purifications to us have no longer *any glory on account of the glory that excelleth*, and happily such twilight views are not needed by those upon whom *the Sun of righteousness has risen*. To such, these parts of the Bible are chiefly useful, as explaining and justifying the ceremonial law; but probably they were the most edifying to those who could only see as *through a glass darkly* the blessing derived from a future Saviour. Romaine, impressed with this idea, has called what is perhaps to us the least interesting book, "the Gospel according to Leviticus;" a thought in which he has been anticipated by St. Jerome, who declares [Epist. ad Paulinam] that almost every syllable in it breathes a spiritual mystery, because its figures lead us to Christ, the High Priest of the New Covenant. In harmony with them, Cowper, in verse, expresses the same sentiments, Olney Hymns, i. 132.

Israel, in ancient days,  
Not only had a view  
Of Sinai in a blaze,  
But learn'd the Gospel too:  
The types and figures were a glass,  
In which they saw a Saviour's face.

The paschal sacrifice,  
And blood-besprinkled door,  
Seen with enlighten'd eyes,  
And once applied with power,

significantly the necessity both of Justification through the atoning blood, not of animals, but of the Lamb of God; and

Would teach the need of other blood,  
To reconcile an angry God.

The lamb, the dove, set forth  
His perfect innocence,  
Whose blood of matchless worth  
Should be the soul's defence;  
For he who can for sin atone,  
Should have no failings of his own.  
The scape-goat on his head  
The people's trespass bore,  
And to the desert led,  
Was to be seen no more:  
In him our Surety seemed to say,  
Behold, I bear your sins away, &c.

And in the spirit in which Cowper has explained the type of the sacrifices, his associate in this work, illustrates that of the sacrificer.

See Aaron, God's anointed priest,  
Within the veil appear,  
In robes of mystic meaning drest,  
Presenting Israel's prayer.

Through him the eye of faith descries  
A greater Priest than he:—

The blood, which as a Priest he bears  
For sinners, is his own;  
The incense of his prayers and tears  
Perfumes the holy throne.

It is most interesting to see, by the light reflected from the Epistle to the Hebrews, that Moses in this ritual wrote as certainly of Christ, as in the express predictions which he has recorded: and this wonderful adaptation, even in the minutest particulars, of the old dispensation to the new, affords to us the most convincing proof, that both had the same, and that a divine, original. The study of the Law ought to strengthen the faith of the Christian, and at the same time to call forth his gratitude, both for his freedom from its yoke, and his fuller insight into its meaning. Agreeing in that meaning as exhibited in these hymns, he will adopt as his own the conclusion of the former;

O grant that I may faithful be  
To clearer light vouchsaf'd to me.



of Sanctification or the cleansing of the heart by the Holy Spirit. Not only the ceremonies of the Law and the Temple itself, but persons who lived under this dispensation, and the events of Jewish history, are typical. We know from our Saviour, that the manna and the brasen serpent were emblematical of Him. We know also on the authority of his Apostle Paul, (1 Cor. x. 4.) that *the rock that followed the Israelites was*, that is represented, *Christ*; and it is reasonable to conclude, not with some, who are disgusted with the abuse of the doctrine, that there are no Types except those cited as such in the New Testament; but that the few there stated are only specimens, and stated in order that we may find in them a key to unlock the hidden meaning of others. Thus the Patriarch Joseph is never named as typical of the Saviour, yet so numerous are the points of resemblance between them which Rollin<sup>c</sup> has brought together, that few can doubt that the former was designed to prefigure the latter. We may also observe, that there are types, which being granted require the admission of others. Thus Joshua, ordained by God to put the Israelites into possession of the promised land, is allowed to be a type of the great Captain of our spiritual salvation. The land consequently into which the former led the real Israel, must adumbrate the inheritance gained by the latter for the Israel of God; and its appellation familiar to Christian ears, "the heavenly Canaan," shows that this type is generally admitted. This acknowledged, the water of baptism becomes an antitype of the Red Sea; and we shall find in the wanderings and battles of God's ancient people, a figure of the sufferings and contests of the Christian's pilgrimage. The Law, which was not restricted to the service of the temple, but was purposely connected with all the business and amusement of life, was a standing Prophecy, well fitted to keep up in the mind of the spiritual

<sup>c</sup> Belles Lettres, iv. 2.

worshipper a due sense of the sinfulness which required continual sacrifices and purifications, and an earnest looking for the expiation and sanctification which they prefigured. (1 Cor. x.) St. Paul assures us, that *the things which happened to them in figures, were written for our example*; but we must beware of overlooking in the spiritual, the literal sense. We may, like St. Paul, (Gal. iv.) *allegorize* the history of Sarah and Hagar, but we must not, as Bp. Marsh observes in his Lectures on Divinity, turn them into an *allegory*. We must also recollect, that spiritual interpretation is not for the conviction of unbelievers, but for the edification of the faithful. Some of these resemblances may edify a devout reader, who will in vain endeavour to convey his impression to one of a less lively imagination; and all types that do not rest upon inspired authority may be disputed. The pressing of such too far perhaps by the Fathers, and by Cocceius and his school, has produced an injurious reaction. When, therefore, the doctrine of types is brought forward, not for edification, but as a branch of evidence, it will be more prudent to confine our proof to those that can be established from the New Testament.

Still as it was to the spiritual worshipper alone that these ceremonies were significant, to those of duller comprehension the same leading truths were announced in express predictions. A future Deliverer had been obscurely promised to our first parents in Paradise, in pronouncing judgment on their Tempter, to preserve them from despair before sentence was passed upon themselves; and the promise was from time to time repeated, and in every instance in more clear and definite language. The Seed of the Woman was perhaps supposed by Eve to be her own offspring, and might have been expected by her, or by any of her daughters, before the limitation to Abraham; but the original outline is filled up by successive touches, till it becomes a finished picture, to

which no pretender can counterfeit a likeness, and which represents in every feature the Son of Mary, and Him alone. Abraham was assured, that in one descended from him by Sarah, all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and when his grandson had a family of twelve sons, and that family grew into a nation, the promise was first restricted to the tribe of Judah, and then to the lineage of David. Even the place of His birth is named, and His office as Prophet, Priest, and Sovereign, is foretold; and, lest the prediction of His triumphant reign should justify those who, confounding His first and second advent, anticipated an earthly conqueror, He is described as *a meek and lowly King*, as one *that will not bruise the broken reed nor quench the smouldering flax*, as *feeding His flock like a Shepherd*, as *a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*. And not only His character, but the particulars of His life and death, His condemnation as a malefactor, the insults and sufferings He endured, His honourable interment, His resurrection and ascension, are so vividly portrayed in the Psalms and in the Prophets, that they appear more like history of the past than prediction of the future. The period too, obscurely foretold by the dying Jacob as posterior to the departure of authority from Judah, had by the chronological prophecy of Daniel been fixed within five hundred years from a decree for rebuilding Jerusalem; so that it is not surprising, that when the fulness of time was come, those who searched the Scriptures were *looking for Redemption in Jerusalem*.

The birth of this Redeemer, who as the Son of Mary was the heir to the throne of David, was reserved for a period of universal peace, when his sceptre had passed into the hands of a stranger; for Herod, though in religion a Jew, was a descendant of Esau; and though a king, he reigned only by the permission of Augustus, whose empire comprehended all the world to the west of Judæa. The sovereignty had for

near six centuries departed from the house of David. His lineal descendant Zorobabel had been placed by Cyrus over the Jews, but without the title of king, when he permitted them to return from their captivity; nothing is recorded concerning his sons; and after the extraordinary commission to Nehemiah had expired, (420 B. C.) the nation was governed by the high priests, but as the subjects first of the Persian monarchs, and then of Alexander and his successors.

They were dependent on the kings of Egypt or Syria, as the arms of either prevailed, till the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, (175 B. C.) who proscribed their religion, and put to death those who adhered to it, drove them into rebellion. Mattathias, a priest of Modin, being invited by the king's commissioner to set the example of sacrificing to idols, slew with the zeal of Phineas both him and a Jew who was about to comply with the command. He destroyed the altar, and, calling upon all who were faithful to the covenant to follow him, fled with his five sons into the mountains. Here he was joined by many of his countrymen, and became the founder of a dynasty called Asamonean, from the name of his grandfather, and Maccabean, it is said, from the initial letters in Hebrew of the text, *Who is like unto Thee among the gods, Jehovah*, (Exod. xv. 11.) which was inscribed upon his son Judah's banner. He died after a reign of one year, and was succeeded in order by his sons, Judas, Jonathan, and Simon, who maintained the war twenty-six years with five kings of Syria, and in the end established the independence of their country, and the aggrandisement of their family, by uniting in their persons the priesthood and the sovereignty. This dynasty had reigned above a century, when the succession (68 B. C.) being disputed between the second Hyrcanus and his younger brother Aristobulus, Pompey interfered, captured Jerusalem, and reestablished the elder. He was the last of the

Asamonean princes, and Julius Cæsar continued him in the high-priesthood, while he transferred the civil government to Antipater, his minister, an Edomite by birth, but a proselyte, as his nation had embraced the law on submitting to the first Hyrcanus. This was the father of Herod, to whom he assigned, at an early age, (47 B. C.) the government of Galilee. Mark Antony, with the consent of the Senate, afterwards made him king of Judæa: and he contrived on the fall of his patron to have his authority confirmed by Augustus. Herod was allied to the Maccabean sovereigns, by marriage with a granddaughter of Hyrcanus; and though he conformed to many heathen customs, kept up the Jewish polity and a nominal independence. He was enterprising, and magnificent, building many cities, and laying out large sums on the restoration of the Temple. But his profuse expenditure led to oppression; he was designing, and was hated for his cruelty; and, knowing the weakness of his title to the crown, he was alarmed at the report of the birth of a King of the Jews, and scrupled not to order the massacre of all the male children of a certain age of Bethlehem, that the one who caused his uneasiness might not escape. Herod had ten wives and a numerous family; but he had put to death three of his sons, two of whom were the children of the Maccabean princess, and he divided his dominions between Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip, the two former of whom were born of the same mother. To Archelaus he assigned Judæa, Samaria, and Idumea, subject to the approbation of Augustus, who confirmed the appointment, though he refused him the title of king. Philip, whom Herod made tetrarch of Trachonitis, is represented by Josephus as an amiable prince, beloved by his subjects, whom he governed with mildness and equity. Herod Antipas, who received Galilee and Peræa, with the title of tetrarch, is described as crafty, and our Saviour calls him a fox. He

had married the daughter of Aretas, the king of a tribe of Arabs; but falling in love with Herodias, prevailed upon her, though both his niece and sister in law, to live with him. Herod Philip, her first husband, having been detected by his father in a conspiracy against him, was left in a private station. Their daughter Salome, whose dancing procured the Baptist's death, became afterwards the wife of Philip the tetrarch, who had no issue, and afterwards of her first cousin Aristobulus, the third brother of the younger Agrippa.

On the death of Herod, Joseph brought back from Egypt the infant Jesus and His mother, and being warned to avoid the dominions of Archelaus, he returned to His former home, which was under the government of Herod the tetrarch. It was in his dominions that our Saviour chiefly lived, and the tetrarchy of Philip, which extended to the northern shores of the lake of Gennesaret, could at any time afford him a safe retreat from his enemies. The subjects of Archelaus complained of his tyranny to the emperor, and he was deposed and banished to Vienna in Gaul, in the tenth year of his reign, the same year in which Jesus accompanied Joseph and Mary to His *Father's house*, the Temple, and the registering which had been made at His birth was now acted upon by the Roman governor. The dominions of Archelaus were reduced to a province, but being of small dimensions, consisting only of Judæa, Samaria, and Idumea, they were placed not like Syria under a legate, but under a procurator of no higher than equestrian rank, who was dependent upon the former. Pontius Pilatus, the fifth of them, whose government dates from the year preceeding the Baptist's ministry, has obtained an awful celebrity by his official condemnation of the *Prince of life*. Both he and Herod, who had gathered together against the Holy Child Jesus, (Acts iv. 27.) as foretold by the Psalmist, were a few years after about the same time sent into exile, and are said to have both perished by their

own hands. He is described as cruel, unjust, and covetous, and wantonly irritated the Jews by ordering, contrary to custom, that the Roman standards, so odious to them as objects of idolatry, should be brought into Jerusalem. After ten years, (A.D. 37.) he was sent to Rome by the legate of Syria, to answer for his slaughter of a multitude of Samaritans, who had peaceably assembled in the expectation of the coming of the Messiah. Tiberius had died before his arrival, but his successor banished him to Vienna in Gaul. The ruin of Herod was effected by the ambition of his wife; but though a pardon was offered her, she determined to share his lot. His nephew and her brother, Herod Agrippa, the grandson of the Asamonæan princess, was intimate with the new emperor. He had been imprisoned for expressing his wish for his predecessor's death; and Caius on his accession released him, and granted him Philip's tetrarchy, vacated by death, with the title of king. Herodias, envious of his superior dignity, persuaded her husband to repair to Rome, to solicit the same rank; but Agrippa sent letters which led to his exile, and obtained for himself his dominions. Herod was first banished to Lyons, and then into Spain; and Claudius, who mainly owed to the younger Herod his recognition by the senate, rewarded him with the government of the whole country. He is praised by Josephus, but to Christians he is known as the first sovereign who persecuted the Church. The Apostle James *he killed with the sword*; (Acts xii. 1.) Peter was delivered out of his hands only by miracle, and he would probably have proceeded in the same course, had it not pleased God to cut it short, for his impiety in accepting the idolatrous homage of his subjects, when celebrating games in honour of his patron, and, seated on his throne in dazzling royal apparel, he was saluted as a god. An angel struck him with disease, and he died within a few days eaten of worms, acknowledging the justice of his punishment.

He reigned only three years, and, on his death, all Judæa became again a Roman province, as his son was thought too young to succeed him. This Agrippa, the brother of Drusilla and Bernice, whom Paul almost persuaded to become a Christian, was afterwards appointed successor to his uncle the king of Chalcis, both in the administration of the Temple, and in his small dominions which were subsequently enlarged, first by a grant of Peræa, and then of Galilee; and he had the mortification to be obliged to assist the Romans in the subjugation of his country, and retired to Rome. He lived to seventy years of age, into the reign of Trajan, having long survived the Jewish war, which he had endeavoured to prevent, and was the patron of Josephus, who records his testimony, with that of Vespasian and Titus, to the truth of his history. We learn from Juvenal, that he was suspected of an incestuous intercourse with Bernice, who was at that time the widow of their uncle, the king of Chalcis, and had left her second husband Polemon, king of Pontus. Titus was so fascinated by her attractions, that he had intended to make her his wife; but he unwillingly yielded to the feelings of the Romans, who would have regarded his marriage with a foreigner as a disgrace, even if her character had been pure. The other sister had abandoned her husband Azizus, king of Emesa, to become the wife of Felix, the governor who felt terrified, not without cause, before Paul his prisoner, when he *reasoned of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come*, but it does not appear that she had been moved. Their son perished in the memorable eruption of Vesuvius, which destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum, and in him terminated, as far as we know, the family of Herod; for we read of no children of Agrippa, or of Berenice.

The Jewish war commenced A.D. 66, the year succeeding St. Paul's martyrdom, which ended after a desperate contest of four years in the destruction of metropolis and temple,



and the dispersion of the nation. The detailed narrative by Josephus of the horrors of the siege, abundantly confirms our Lord's prediction of *this great tribulation*; and as less than forty years intervened between it and the fulfilment, many of his contemporaries must have lived to acknowledge its truth.

This slight sketch seemed desirable, to illustrate the difficulties of His ministry, as enhanced by the temper of the times. In the days of the taxing, before His birth, Judas the Galilean rebelled, maintaining that the payment of tribute to Cæsar was treason to Jehovah, the true King of Israel; and although he and his followers perished, his principles survived him, and Christ Himself speaks of *Galileans, whose blood Pilate had lately mingled with their sacrifices*. The state of the country was perturbed during His whole ministry, and it required all His wisdom to baffle the insidious attempts of His enemies to ensnare Him, and of His admirers to force Him to declare Himself King. He, therefore, withdrew Himself at times from public view, retiring into deserts; He never visited Cæsarea, the political capital, and Jericho only once, and attended but five feasts at Jerusalem. We understand from this perplexity of His position, why He so often veiled His meaning in parables, why He sometimes forbad those whom He had healed to make known their cures, and why He did not publicly announce Himself as the Messiah till the hour of His sufferings had arrived. When we recollect the view taken by the whole nation, whether friends or foes, of the Messiah's office, we perceive that the assumption of it would have been regarded as treason by the latter, and as a signal for revolt by the former.

# LECTURES

ON

## THE DIATESSARON.

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### PART I.

#### 1. *Preface to St. Luke's Gospel, 1—4.*

THE writing of the Gospels was not the cause, but one of the effects, of belief in Christianity, since before the writing of any, it had been propagated beyond Judæa, by persons who had heard the discourses and seen the miracles of our Lord. The want of some permanent record of His mission would be every where generally felt; and as the events which distinguished it had not been *done in a corner*, (Acts xxvi. 26.) as the Apostle Paul reminded the Jewish king before the representative of the Emperor, but in the presence of enemies as well as of friends, the Gospels would never have been received as authentic memorials, if there were in any place persons able to disprove their contents. The Preface to that of St. Luke informs us, that *many had already taken in hand to set forth a narrative of those things that had been accomplished*<sup>a</sup>; and from the addition, that they had been delivered by *eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word*, we may conclude that these accounts were substantially true, though not perhaps so complete as what Luke was able to supply, since without any further observa-

<sup>a</sup> Campbell's version, *πεπληροφορημένων*: *surely believed*, Authorized Translation.

tion he adds, that it seemed fit to him also to do the same. From this we learn, that, contrary to the assertion of modern infidels, the miracles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ must have caused a great sensation throughout the empire, among Gentiles no less than Jews, and excited the desire of a more perfect knowledge of His life and doctrines. This may also be reasonably inferred from the dedication of his work to a person of rank, who had been already *orally instructed* in Christianity; for though Theophilus, Beloved of God, is a title suitable to every genuine believer, I cannot agree with the few commentators, who suppose it to be used by St. Luke in that sense. The fictitious persons in modern dialogues are often designated by such descriptive appellations; but the opinion that it is the real name of an individual, is more in harmony with the character of history and the simplicity of the writer. Probably he had been converted by Luke, but as no tradition respecting his station and country has been preserved, it is useless to repeat the conjectures of the moderns. If however, as we have observed, this Gospel carries with it internal evidence of having been written for Gentiles, we may presume that Theophilus was one; and he was no doubt a person of consequence, for the epithet *Κράτιστος*, *most excellent*, applied to him, does not refer to character but to rank, as it is given to the wicked governors Felix and Festus, and answers to Excellency, Grace, and similar honorary appellations of modern times. Nor should it surprise us, that a person of high rank was found in that age among the disciples of Jesus, when we remember king Agrippa's confession to Paul, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian*, (Acts xxvi. 28.) and that Sergius Paulus, the Proconsul of Cyprus, was actually his convert. The use of the epithet both by Luke and Paul shows, that Christians who refuse to employ the customary complimentary phrases of their time are over scrupulous.

2. *The Pre-existence, Divinity, Incarnation, and Manifestation of the glory of the Logos, or only-begotten Son of God.* St. John i. 1—18.

St. Mark and St. John commence with the public ministry of the Messiah, St. Matthew and St. Luke supply an account of His birth and infancy; and the latter carries the reader a few months back to that of John the Baptist, who was sent to usher in this new dispensation. Their narratives are required to prove that the Messiah was, as predicted, David's Son; and to establish the important fact, that in His desire to ransom our fallen race, "He did not abhor the Virgin's womb," but was literally *born of a woman*; (Gal. iv. 4.) formed of her substance, without any human father; being neither, as the early heretics taught, an incorporeal phantom, nor, as affirmed by some in our days, a mere man, like the other descendants of Adam. The importance of the tenet of His miraculous conception is evinced, by its insertion in all the early Creeds; and certainly unless He had been "clearly void of sin both in His Flesh and in His Spirit, He could not have been the Lamb without spot, who by the sacrifice of Himself once made, should take away the sins of the world." (Article xv.) Thus it was necessary that He should become the Son of God, even in His human nature, but we know that this title is His also, in the highest sense, and that "He was begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with Him." (Art. ii.) We learn from Isaiah as interpreted by Matthew, (vii. 17.) that *He is God with us*; and the same passage in Micah (v. 2.) which foretells His birth, declares *His goings forth to have been from old, from everlasting*. His Divinity thus intimated in the Old Testament is assumed and argued on in the Epistles, but the earlier Evangelists only lead us to infer it; we might therefore expect it to be explicitly announced in the opening of

the supplementary Gospel of His beloved disciple. Yet this declaration is not introduced, as might have been expected, in connection with His Incarnation, but with the testimony borne to His preeminence by the Baptist, who acknowledges that Jesus was before himself, not only in dignity, but in existence, which since He was born after him, must have been before He came into this world. As this Evangelist had been a disciple of the Baptist, he seems to have partaken of his master's anxiety to exalt the Lord, Whom he had been sent to proclaim. Thus after declaring the Messiah to be the Light, he continues, *There was a man sent from God whose name was John, to bear witness concerning the Light*; and he carefully repeats, that Christ is *the Light, the real Light*. Our Lord confirms both these affirmations of His Apostle, for He calls the Baptist, *a burning* (λόγος) *and a shining<sup>a</sup> lamp, not light, but a light-bearer<sup>a</sup>* that illuminates one country, and but for a season; while of Himself He says, *I am the Light* (φῶς) *of the world*, (John viii. 12.) that is, the source from which all light has emanated, as the Evangelist expresses it, *the Light which lighteth every one that cometh into the world*.

To establish beyond all doubt the Messiah's superiority, St. John commences with His pre-existence and proper divinity; and his statement rises in dignity; for he states, first, that the Word existed in the beginning, then that it existed with God, lastly, that it is God. *In the beginning, the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. In this brief yet comprehensive sentence, the inspired writer, by a simple statement of the orthodox faith, condemns the heretics of his own and future times. The Word was in the beginning, is an assertion incompatible with the creed of all who deny the pre-existence and the eternal filiation of the Son of God. The Evangelist does

<sup>a</sup> Campbell's Version, Light. A. T.

not say, as Moses did of the material world, that God created the Word, but that *the Word was*, that is, as St. Paul declares to the Colossians, (i. 15.) *begotten before all creatures<sup>b</sup>, before God's works of old, before ever the world was*, (Prov. viii.) as Solomon affirms of it under the kindred title of Wisdom; begotten, not made, and therefore there never was, as the Arians maintained, a period when He was not; but He was co-eternal with the Father, "Light out of Light," as the ray beams forth<sup>c</sup> from the sun, (Heb. i. 3.) "bright effluence of bright essence increate." The Word was, not as an attribute *ἐν* in God, but as a person *πρὸς* with God. This marks the distinction of persons in the Deity, which the Sabellians confound; and that none may divide the substance, it is added, that the *Word was God*. This affirmation contradicts alike the Gnostic notion of His being an inferior Emanation, and the modern heresy of His simple humanity; and, lest the reader should overlook the personal distinction while contemplating the Son's Divinity, the inspired writer repeats, *the Same was in the beginning with God*. "Let these words," therefore, says St. Basil, (Hom. xvi.) who as a Greek must have understood the force of Greek prepositions, "be impressed as a seal upon your memories, and confute with them the sophisms of those who maintain that Christ had no existence before He was born."

It is remarkable, that instead of the Son of God, the Evangelist here uses *Λόγος*, which our translators, retaining the theological language of the Western Church derived from the Latin translation of the Scriptures, render *Word*, obviously in a peculiar sense, for no one can think, as Eusebius observes, that the Word of God is similar to a word composed of syllables. No other language can convey the double meaning

<sup>b</sup> Waterland, in his Sermons on Christ's Divinity, p. 35. shows this to be the true translation.

<sup>c</sup> Brightness of His glory, A. T.

of the Greek Logos, which signifies both the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and the λόγος προφορικὸς of the Stoics; that is, reason as it exists in the mind, *Thought*; or as embodied in sound\*, *Speech* or *Word*. Some translators, especially those who have a Socinian bias, prefer Reason, as more favourable to their view; but the majority render it *Word*, and there are theological writers, who, objecting to any translation as inadequate, retain the original. Either sense will suit the second Person of the Trinity, for He is both that wisdom which God *possessed in the beginning of His way*, as the human soul does its thoughts; (Proverbs viii. 22.) and it is not only in *these last days that God hath spoken through His Son*, (Heb. i. 2.) but He has ever been the Revealer of His secrets<sup>f</sup>. (Dan. viii. 13.) God the Father dwells in *unapproachable light, and Him no man hath seen or can see*. The Logos, therefore, is the channel through which He has always communicated His will to mankind, from the time that the voice of Jehovah spoke to Adam in Paradise, till He assumed flesh as the Son of Mary. All the successive mani-

\* Eusebius, Dem. Ev. v. 5. Lactantius notices the two significations as follows. "Sed melius Græci λόγον dicunt, quam nos Verbum sive Sermonem. Λόγος enim et sermonem significat, et rationem; quia ille est et vox, et sapientia Dei." De Ver. Sap. 9. Tertullian (Adv. Prax. 5.) prefers *ratio* to *sermo*; and yet says, we ascribe to the Logos a proper spiritual existence, and that it was put forth from God by generation. Beza and Erasmus translate it *sermo*. Dr. Burton's Bampton Lectures convey much information respecting the use of the term in Plato, Philo, and in the Fathers.

<sup>f</sup> The reader, who turns to the Latin or English Bible, will not discern this title except in the margin of the latter. The etymology of the word *Palmuni*, and its close connection with that of *Pelah*, Secret or Wonderful, the title claimed by the Angel that appeared to Manoah, who, it is evident from the context, was Jehovah, and ascribed by Isaiah, (ix.) with others of the most exalted meaning, to the Child *to be born to us*, seems to justify this translation, which is adopted by Calvin and other approved commentators, and supported by the Targum. "This numberer of secrets, or wonderful numberer, must mean a person of extraordinary rank, as being able to unfold those secrets which are hid from other angels, and is therefore justly supposed to mean the Son of God, the wonderful Counsellor, as being acquainted with all God's designs." *Louth*.

festations of Deity under the patriarchal dispensation, and those of the Angel of the Covenant to Moses, to Joshua, Gideon, Manoah, and others, were made by the second Person of the Trinity, and seemingly in the likeness of man, which afterwards he in reality assumed. This which is asserted by Justin Martyr<sup>κ</sup>, has been ever the received opinion of the Church, and indeed in many of these appearances it is demonstrated by the alternate use of the words, Angel<sup>h</sup> and God, and it is declared in this introduction that the Word *came to His own land, and His own people did not receive Him*. It is lost sight of, however, by many modern divines, though a doctrine full of consolation; yet even the heathen had a glimpse of it, for Plato informs us, that all the commerce between God and man is carried on by Demons, who convey from men to God prayers, and from Gods to men commands or the rewards of sacrifices. Since we must choose between Reason and Word, I prefer the latter, as in all the instances in which it occurs in the Gospels, it is used in this sense; and Archbishop Laurence<sup>i</sup> observes, that the corresponding term in Hebrew and Chaldee will bear no other. Augustine says, the Son is called the Word of God, because His Father makes known His will by Him in the same manner as a man makes known his mind by words; and to this interpretation the Evangelist himself leads us, when he says, that *the only-begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared* [or explained] *Him*, that is, both His nature and His will. The abstract is to be taken for the concrete, by an idiom common in the New Testament, as salvation for saviour; thus speech being equivalent to speaker, the Word stands for that oracle or

<sup>κ</sup> Dial. c. Tryph.

<sup>h</sup> Joshua vi. 2. Hosea xii. 3—5. Judges xiii. 21, 22. vi. 11. 14.

<sup>i</sup> Dissertation upon the Logos, p. 43.



interpreter of the divine counsels, *who speaketh the words of God.* (John iii. 34.)<sup>k</sup>

Logos, in the sense in which it occurs in this Introduction, is also used by St. John in the opening of his first Epistle, in which, being as anxious to establish his Master's Humanity as here His divinity, he speaks of hearing, seeing, and handling the Word of life; and he applies it as one of the titles of the triumphant Saviour, where he describes Him as riding on a white horse, *in righteousness to judge, and to make war*, (Rev. xix. 11.) in a sublime passage which bears a striking resemblance to one in Solomon's Wisdom, (xviii. 4.) where the Logos is described as a fierce Warrior, bearing a sharp sword, who leaped from heaven out of the royal throne. The only instance of its use in this sense in another New Testament author, is perhaps in the prefatory sentence of St. Luke's Gospel, for *ministers and eye-witnesses* seem more appropriate to a living person than to a spoken word. But the latter best suits the context of St. James (i. 18.) and of St. Peter, (1 Ep. i. 23.) A remarkable passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv. 12, 13.) has been so applied by many commentators; and this interpretation is plausible; but our faith in it is shaken by observing, that where St. Paul (Eph. vi. 17.) seems to personify the Word, by calling it *the sword of the Spirit*, he does not use the ambiguous *logos*, but *ῥῆμα*, *rhema*, as if on purpose to prevent its application to the Son; and that when St. Peter (Acts x. 36.) speaks of *the word of God as sent to the children of Israel*, he employs them both, lest the reader should think of the personal Word. The term, therefore, may be considered as peculiar to St. John; and it is natural to enquire why he employed and whence he de-

<sup>k</sup> This interpretation is so satisfactory, that no other is needed, and therefore I should not have mentioned that of Laurentius Valla, that *λόγος* is put for *λεγομένης*, spoken of, or promised, if Tittmann had not stated that it is approved by Ernesti.

rived it. Bishop Pearson tells us, "that the doctrine of the Logos was the current interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and that the Targums, or Chaldee Paraphrases, which were read in the synagogues, taught the Jews of Palestine that God and the Word of God were the same; which explains why John delivered so great a mystery in so few sentences, as he spoke to those who understood him. The existence, nature, and operations of the Logos were allowed; its union with the man Jesus was the only point to be established." The Christian may learn from the introduction to this Gospel, that the *Word* of the Lord, by Whom the Psalmist (xxxiii. 6.) declares that the heavens were made, was not a command, but a person; and it appears, that the belief in a manifestation of the Deity, whether called Word, Son, or Angel, that is, Messenger, is the doctrine of the Old Testament; but the support which Pearson and others derive to this doctrine from the Targums is much weakened, on a minute examination, which shows that it is an idiom of the language in which they are written, to use the noun *Memra*, word, as a substitute for the emphatic pronoun self, of God or of man<sup>1</sup>. Still it might in conjunction with the Septuagint version originate the use of Logos in a personal sense, which, as appears from the Apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon, (xviii. 15.) must have been prevalent among the Alexandrian Jews before the Christian æra. Celsus maintains that it was their opinion, that the Logos was the Son of God. This Origen denies, and concludes, that it was borrowed from

<sup>1</sup> Thus the Jerusalem Targum translates, (Exod. xix. 9.) the *Word* of Jah said to Moses, "Behold, my *Word* shall be revealed to thee in the thick cloud;" and this seems decisive; but it is equally applied to men, as another Targum renders Eccles. i. 2. Solomon said by his *Word*, "Vanity of vanities," and the application to the Messiah can be proved in no passage, and is in this impossible. "Behold, my servant, the Messiah, I will draw near to him, my chosen, in whom my word hath delight." Isaiah xlii. 1. Dr. Pye Smith's *Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, l. vii. 2.

Plato; but he, I apprehend, adopted both the term and the doctrines connected with it from the East; and Philo, I conceive, combining his speculations with his own and ancient traditions, gave to Logos a meaning approximating nearer to that of St. John, for Plato's idea answers to that of Reason better than of Speech. In Philo's numerous works, the titles and operations assigned to the Logos, bear a remarkable resemblance to those given to the Son of God, both by St. John and St. Paul, for he is described in them, as the instrument through which God has made and governed the world, and manifests Himself; and He calls Him the first-begotten Son of God, the divine, the eternal Word, the Image of God, the Beginning, the express Image of God's seal, the Angel, the Interpreter and Representative of God. Still we can hardly imagine that his works were known to the Evangelist; but there were Gnostics at Ephesus, where he resided, who had given currence to the term, and it was desirable that he should silence their erroneous notions by a correct definition of it; and this opinion, suggested by Michaelis, and ably supported by Dr. Burton, is strengthened by the knowledge, that not only Logos, but Zoe, Alethia, Monogenes, Plemora, that is, *Life, Truth, Only-begotten, Fullness*, which all occur in this introduction, were terms of Gnostic theology. In borrowing this term, it must have been the object of the Evangelist to restore it to its true meaning. According to the Gnostics, the Logos, was only an inferior emanation; St. John shows, therefore, that He proceeded immediately from the Deity, and was Himself God; that Life, Truth, &c. were not other emanations, but only other names for the Logos; and that this Logos, Who was the Creator of the world, became incarnate in Jesus the Son of Mary, and was thus the Christ.

The *Word was now made flesh*, but still retained the Divine nature, and was thus able to accomplish the great

work which He had of His own accord undertaken. He was perfect God, and perfect Man; for we are not to suppose that He had only a human body governed by the Deity, but that He had also a human soul, which appears from His own declaration, *Not My will but Thine be done*, and without which He would not have been a Man. Thus He is both God and Man, united in one person, the difference between the two natures being no wise changed by their union. As such He differs from every other being, yet both natures were necessary to Him as Mediator and Saviour, for it is upon this union, that the value of His sufferings depends. As man He could suffer, but not satisfy; as God He could satisfy, but not suffer. We must also remember that the Son of God did not take upon Him man's nature only to die: we know that He ascended with it into heaven, and that His Godhead and Manhood are never to be divided. How deep is the obligation of the human race to Him, Who, *passing by Angels*, came down from heaven for their salvation! May we duly feel this, and may our gratitude *constrain us to live to Him Who died for us!* There is then and there ever will be a Man in Heaven, and as Man the Governor of the Universe; and as He partook of human nature, so the Apostle Peter assures us, that through His *great and precious promises, we may become partakers of the Divine nature.*

Having affirmed the Personality and Divinity of the Logos, the Evangelist proceeds to declare, that the Word was the agent through Whom, as the instrumental cause, all things and beings were created, without a single exception. He adds, *in Him was life, and He was the Light of men*; the author of their moral as well as their physical existence, of their mental as well as bodily powers; and that notwithstanding this *Light shone in a darkness* which it did not disperse. The heathen opened not their eyes to its beams as reflected from the objects which surrounded them, an attentive medi-

tation on which would have discovered Him to them as their Maker, or as dimly seen by their philosophers; and even when He came as Man to His own peculiar country Israel, His own people, though they had been in various ways prepared for His advent, rejected Him. Still, His advent was not without effect; there was both among Jews and Gentiles a *seed to serve Him*, and *to as many as received Him He gave the right<sup>m</sup> of becoming the sons of God*, and consequently heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Himself. The value of this privilege appears from the declaration, that it could not be obtained for us by human agency, not by descent from any particular race, by natural birth, or by voluntary adoption, but by the good pleasure of our heavenly Father. He then shows, that those who rejected the Word were inexcusable; for he had the testimony first of the Baptist, and then of His own disciples, who proclaimed Him to the world, and had *beheld His glory, the glory of the only-begotten Son*, not only in the miracles which He continually wrought, but visibly at His baptism, transfiguration, and ascension, for He *had been made flesh*, and *sojourned<sup>n</sup> among them*, as Jehovah had dwelt within the tabernacle. This allusion leads the Evangelist to contrast the Law and the Gospel, the former as *given* through Moses as by a servant, the latter as *produced<sup>o</sup> through* Jesus Christ as its author; the former was a favour, if the Jew be compared with the Gentile, but the latter is the *real favour*, which all Christians have received, instead of it, out of *His fulness<sup>p</sup>*. And this, the Logos only could bestow, for, unlike men, He *is in the bosom of the Father*, and therefore, fully knowing his character and will, He *has declared Him*. The doctrine with which St. John opens his

<sup>m</sup> power, A. T.<sup>n</sup> dwelt, A. T.<sup>o</sup> came by.

<sup>p</sup> *Grace instead of grace*, is Chrysostom's interpretation, which the context I think proves to be the true one, and certainly gives a fuller and better sense than the other. *Grace upon grace*, A. T. that is, most abundant grace.

Gospel, is established in the discourses which follow from the Logos Himself; who repeats several of the dogmas here affirmed. Thus, in His prayer to His Father, He refers to the glory which He had with Him before the world. He says, *He has life in Himself*, that *He is the Light of the world*, that *He is in Heaven*, and that *God is His [own] Father*, and that He is not by adoption, but by nature, *His beloved*, that is His only, *Son*. The Evangelist concludes with the declaration, that his object in writing was, that men *might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they might have life through His name*. (xx. 31.) The term Logos having been misapplied, the Evangelist probably on that account does not choose to use it any more, and not having been employed by other New Testament writers, it soon became obsolete.

### 3. *The Conception of Elisabeth.* Luke i. 1—23.

The canon of the Hebrew Scriptures closes with the declaration of Jehovah, that He will send *Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord*, (Malachi iv. 5, 6.) and we learn from the infallible exposition of our Saviour, that His contemporaries, who understood the prediction literally, were mistaken in supposing that the Tishbite would for this purpose return to life, and that it foretold, as explained by Gabriel to his future father, the coming of one *in the spirit and power* of that Reformer of Israel. *This messenger of the Lord, this voice*, as he is emphatically designated by Isaiah, (xl.) was to be qualified for his office of Herald, even from his birth, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and was to be dedicated to God as a Nazarite, who was bound to abstain *from wine and strong drink*. (Numbers vi. 3.) He is called the Baptist, from the emblematical rite of baptism, with which he was *to make*

*ready a people, prepared* for their incarnate God; and they, by their submission to this washing of the body, confessed that the subjects of the Redeemer were expected to be pure in heart. His ministry was to be successful; and therefore not only his father Zachariah, but many, *would rejoice at his birth*. The Messiah's forerunner was to be his kinsman after the flesh, and was to descend through both parents from the sacerdotal line, though his ministry was not to be in the temple, but in the wilderness: and his birth, though not strictly miraculous, was to be contrary to the ordinary course of nature. Zachariah and Elisabeth, his parents, are characterized as *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*, that is, as far as is compatible with human infirmity; and as *both righteous before God*, that is, not apparently only, but in reality, since He knoweth the secrets of the heart. They had reached advanced age without issue, and the angel's address, *Thy prayer is heard*, implies that Zachariah continued to pray for a child. It is observable, that though divorce was the common practice of his countrymen, and justified by their religious teachers, he had not married another wife.

As each class of priests consisted of a multitude of individuals, the several offices of the daily service were distributed among them by lot, and the most honourable of these, the offering incense upon the golden altar in the outer sanctuary at the time of the oblation, now fell to Zachariah. During this service, the congregation in the courts without was engaged in silent prayer. Zachariah *was not strong in faith*, like Abraham, who was *fully persuaded that what God had promised*, though seemingly impossible, *He was able to perform*; but though not only Isaac, but other eminent Israelites, as Jacob, Samson, and Samuel, had been born of women who, like Elisabeth, had been regarded as barren, he staggered through unbelief at the promise of a son, which an

angel is sent to announce to him, and required a sign, *How shall I know this?* The angel, who had declared that Zachariah should beget the second Elijah, *Who should turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God*, now proclaims himself to be Gabriel, the same who had revealed to Daniel (ix.) the time of the coming of Messiah, the Prince. His name should have predisposed him to believe, for none of the heavenly host could with so much propriety have been commissioned to announce that the time was about to be accomplished. But a sign was asked for, and it was granted in displeasure, for it was a manifest rebuke of his want of faith in the angel's word. He was struck with a temporary loss of hearing and speech, till the promise was accomplished. The congregation was waiting for Zachariah to dismiss them with the customary blessing, but when he came forth he could only intimate what had happened by his gestures. He was, however, able to go through his allotted ministration, and at the expiration of his week return to his home in the hilly part of Judæa, supposed to have been Hebron.

#### 4. *Gabriel's Salutation of the Virgin Mary. Luke i. 26—38.*

In the sixth month of his wife's pregnancy, the same angel was sent by God to Nazareth, to Miriam, or Mary, a virgin of the house of David, betrothed, but not yet married, to Joseph, a descendant of the same illustrious progenitor, and though in the humble occupation of a carpenter, the heir of his throne. He salutes her as *the most Blessed of women*<sup>a</sup>, and *favoured* by the Lord, as chosen to be the mother of the Messiah; and he directs her to give the Babe the significant name of *Jesus*, or Saviour, and assures her that *He shall sit on the throne of His father David*, and *reign*, not like His

<sup>a</sup> *blessed among women*, A. T.



predecessor for a few years, but *for ever, over the house of Jacob*, assuring her in Isaiah's words, that *of His kingdom there should be no end*. We should not have been surprised if an unprecedented miracle, a Virgin's conception, should not have been credited by this young handmaid; but, *How shall this be?* her reply is very different from *Whereby shall I know this?* that of the aged priest, from whom we might have expected belief in a prediction, like that which had been fulfilled to his ancestor Abraham, and which had been even the subject of his prayers. His implies doubt, hers only seeks for direction. The angel, therefore, informs her, that she shall conceive through the immediate energy of the Holy Spirit, and gives her unmasked, as a sign, the conception of her aged and hitherto barren cousin, Elisabeth, informing her, in the language of the Lord on a similar occasion to Sarah, (Gen. xviii. 14.) *that with God nothing is impossible*. Mary could not doubt that her pregnancy would subject her to reproach, and it might be to danger of her life; yet without hesitation she implicitly yields to the Divine will, saying, *Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word*.

5. *Mary visits her cousin Elisabeth.* Luke i. 39—56.

Her anxiety to know the fact from Elizabeth herself, we may presume, induced the Virgin to take a journey from Nazareth to Hebron, nearly the whole extent of the land. On her arrival she received full confirmation of her faith, for Elisabeth, to whom the secret of Mary's conception had been revealed, immediately greeted her by inspiration with the angel's salutation, as *Blessed among women*; and though her superior in age and station, she acknowledges it as a con-

descension in the future *mother of her Lord* to visit her, and gives proof of her own pregnancy by declaring, that no sooner had the *voice of Mary's salutation sounded in her ears, than the babe leaped in her womb for joy*. Probably her recollection of what her husband was now suffering for his want of faith, impelled her to utter, in commendation of her who had shown no doubt or misgiving, this truth of universal application, *Happy is she who believes*. The Virgin, encouraged by this address, bursts forth into a hymn of praise. For four centuries the voice of prophecy had been mute, but as the *Glory of His people Israel* was about to appear, it again breaks silence. The Virgin is now inspired to *magnify the Lord, and to rejoice in God her Saviour*, for the mercy showed unto herself; the father of the Baptist soon after blesses the Lord *for visiting and redeeming His people*; the heavenly host descends to sing at the birth of their Lord and ours; and Simeon closes with his affecting farewell, satisfied to depart, since he has seen Him Who is to be the Saviour of the Gentile as well as the Jew. These three preeminently Christian hymns are familiar to us, from having been incorporated into the service of the Church. Taking them in the order in which they stand, they clearly unfold the scheme of redemption, each beginning where the former ceases. Thus Mary mentions only the birth of her Son, the descent and power of this *Horn of salvation* are asserted by Zachariah; her declaration, that *God hath holpen Israel*, is by him expanded into a description of this salvation, and Simeon intimates, that it is to be extended to the Gentiles. The Virgin's hymn strongly resembles that of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, in which the blessed fruit of the Virgin's womb is first celebrated by a woman, and under the title of Messiah, or King; yet with this striking difference, that Hannah in the fulness of her triumph dwells on her aggrandisement, while the Virgin thinks of the *lowliness* of her

condition<sup>r</sup>. To the angel she had declared her acquiescence in the Divine will; she now expresses in the most emphatic manner her exultation in God her Saviour, and assigns as the reason, that, passing by *the mighty and the rich*, He had selected her *of low degree* to be the mother of the Messiah. Her gratitude arises from reflection on the lowliness of her condition, not of her mind, and she advances no claim of superior virtue, to entitle her to this distinction<sup>s</sup>, but classing herself with all *who fear God*, regards her miraculous conception as an act of *mercy*. Her faith realizes what is yet future, and she foretells that the promise to Abraham is about to be fulfilled, and that Israel will be delivered by her Son. Viewing His birth as the cause of joy not to herself and her family alone, she declared that, in consequence of this miraculous interference of the Almighty, *all generations will henceforth esteem her happy*.

It is painful to think how many, not content to regard this handmaid of the Lord as the happiest, or the most blessed, of women, have exalted her to His throne, invoke her aid even more than that of her Son, and address her with titles which belong to God alone. France was placed by Louis XIII. under her especial protection, and his vow was renewed by Louis XVIII. on his restoration: modern Popes invoke her without any terms to qualify their adoration, and the Spanish divines raise her above human nature, maintaining as an Article of Faith her immaculate conception, and consequent freedom from original sin. Even in the present enlightened age, notwithstanding the continued protest of the reformed Churches, it is to be feared that Roman Catholics worship this handmaid of the Lord

<sup>r</sup> Jebb's Sacred Literature, sect. xx.

<sup>s</sup> The *lowliness* of the Prayer Book translation, which is the rendering of the *humilitas* of the Vulgate, may suggest the consideration of her humility, which the original (not *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, but *ταπεινότης*) does not support.

more frequently and more devoutly than her Maker; and we know that many among their most talented and learned divines address her, not only as a subordinate mediator with her Son, but as the direct bestower of blessings, and reliever of distress. Trained as we have been in a better school of Theology, we are amazed that any Christian should seek from a created being, blessings which the Creator alone is able, and has graciously promised, to bestow, or even solicit the intercession of saint or angel, when he is authorized to come *boldly to the throne of grace, through His beloved Son*, Whom He hears always. But few, I fear, feel sufficiently how such worship dishonours the Redeemer, by transferring His attributes to His servants, or lament as deeply as they ought, that so gross a delusion should fascinate so many persons, not only of pious feelings, but of powerful and cultivated understandings. Happily it is a delusion, not of the heart, but of the head; still its effects must be pernicious, as in a greater or less degree it diverts the affections from Him who ought to be their supreme object. The fact, while it should excite our pity and our prayers for those who are in so injurious an error, ought to impress us with gratitude to our heavenly Father, for the inestimable privileges which we enjoy as members of a Church, which has in all respects so faithfully reverted to Scripture, and has throughout her Liturgy embodied the important truth, that there is *but one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*, Who alone from His peculiar nature is able as well as willing to fulfil that office. It must surprise the Romanist, that the Virgin is so rarely mentioned in the Scriptures, and that on the two occasions which offer of magnifying her, it seems that her Son purposely designed to warn us from ascribing to her more honour than is due. The passage before us, which has led to this digression, contains the only commendation bestowed upon her, and this is heightened by a

mistranslation, for the angel's salutation is in the Vulgate rendered, instead of *Favoured*, full of grace, (*gratia plena*.) Thus attention is turned from the favour conferred of being selected to be the Messiah's mother, to the grace supposed to be inherent in her; and this salutation was by St. Dominic converted into an act of adoration, which in the devotion of the Rosary, in general use in the Church of Rome, is repeated a hundred and fifty times, while the Lord's Prayer is to be said only fifteen. This translation is obviously erroneous, and ours is confirmed by the Angel's subsequent explanation, *Thou hast found favour with God*.

6. *The Birth of John the Baptist.* Luke i. 56—80.

Mary, after continuing with her cousin three months, returned home, and Elisabeth was in due time delivered of a son, who was afterwards designated, from his office, the Baptist. On the eighth day after his birth, the time for circumcision, a large company assembled, and it being proposed to give him his father's name, his mother informed them that he was to be called *John*, that is, *God is favourable*, or *gracious*, a most appropriate appellation for him whose office it was to proclaim the reign of favour, or grace. His father being appealed to, wrote down his name, John, in obedience to the command of the angel, and having thereby acknowledged him as God's gift, the season of his correction expired, and he recovered the power of speech. Faith restored what incredulity had taken away, and his first employment of this recovered faculty, which he had abused by raising objections, is to praise God, *for visiting and redeeming His people*. His hymn commences, where the Virgin's ends, with the testimony of prophecy. Like her, he considers the reign of her Son, of Whom he speaks as if already born, as the fulfil-

ment of the oath which He swore to their father Abraham. He thanks God for the descent from David of this *Horn of salvation*; and combines, like the ancient Prophets to whom he refers, with the anticipation of redemption *from the hand of all that hate them*, a spiritual deliverance, and the ability to serve God both in *holiness and in righteousness*. He then addresses his own infant as the Herald that was *to go before the face of Jehovah, to prepare His ways*; but returns again to the reign of the Messiah, Whom he designates as, in Zechariah's language, the *Day-spring*, or *rising Sun*, referring also to Malachi's *Sun of Righteousness*; and while he characterises it as connected with *peace*, and *the remission of sin*, he seems, in language imitated from Isaiah, to allude to the conversion of the heathen.

We do not know how long John's parents lived to superintend his education; but as he grew in age, he was prepared in solitude for his high and important destination, under the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit; for he was neither brought up by the Scribes, nor attended at the temple, but *was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel*. There he lived with great austerity, drinking no fermented liquor, and eating such food as the place afforded, *locusts and wild honey*. His clothing was the coarse habit which the poor wore, and which the rich occasionally assumed as a garb of humiliation or mourning. He was therefore, even in outward appearance, a second Elijah, and much more in reality, being endued, as the angel had announced, with *the spirit and power* of that eminent servant of God. Both were raised up in times of almost universal corruption, and both executed their commission with zeal and intrepidity. The abstemiousness and rigour of the Baptist's life were calculated to excite attention and reverence, to reclaim the thoughtless, and to alarm the impenitent; but whatever mortification he practised himself, he was a preacher not of

penance, but of reformation; and we do not find that he enjoined upon others more than the forsaking of sin, and the fulfilment of their duties. His own call was to baptize in the desert, but we find that he continued there only because it was his appointed station; for he is afterwards found in the palace of Herod, whom he reprov'd as boldly as Elijah had the king of Israel.

7. *The Angel informs Joseph of his virgin bride's miraculous conception of the predicted Saviour. Matt. i. 18—25.*

When Joseph found that his betrothed wife was pregnant, he was at a loss how to act; for, as *a just man*, he was desirous of divorcing her, yet, as a merciful one, of doing it *privately*, and this might be done without a breach of the law. In this perplexity he fell asleep, and an angel, probably Gabriel, is sent to remove his doubts, by informing him of her miraculous conception, and to instruct him to take her to his home, it being the design of Divine Providence to raise up, in him, a friend and protector for the Virgin and the infant Saviour. The angel announces to him, as he had before to the future mother, that the Child shall be called *Jesus*, which Matthew affirms to be the accomplishment of Isaiah's prediction to Ahaz, *A virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, God with us.* Emmanuel clearly designates the divine nature of the Child; and Joshua, (for Jesus is only a Greek corruption of it,) Jehovah, the Saviour; but the meaning of the former is more extensive, since, in *with us*, it includes His humanity. This name, which had become an ordinary one, had been borne by two eminent men, types of the true and divine Joshua. The first was the son of Nun, the friend and successor of Moses, who led the Israelites

into the earthly Canaan, and gave rest unto them from all their enemies, *a rest* which is shown in the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv.) to be a figure of *that which yet remaineth* (in heaven, the true Canaan) *to the people of God*. The second was the son of Josedech, high priest on the return from the Captivity, whom, as well as Zerubbabel the civil governor, Haggai (i. 11.) *stirred up* to rebuild the Temple, and concerning whom Zechariah (iii. vi.) has two prophecies. He is called in both, as typical of Jesus, *the Branch*, which the Septuagint renders, Ἀνατολή, and hence perhaps this word, translated in our version *Day-spring*, is transferred in that sense to the song of Zacharias, the father of the Baptist. *The Man whose name is the Branch*, is also called by the prophet, *a Priest upon His throne*; and this High Priest *after the order of Melchisedek* is alone entitled and qualified to wear both the royal and sacerdotal crowns, which, though assumed by the Levite rulers of the Maccabæan line, were according to the Jewish polity incompatible; and king Uzziah's attempt to perform the priest's office had been miraculously punished by leprosy, which by a just retribution produced exclusion from his own. Our Lord wears *many crowns*, and has many names, but that of Jesus or Saviour is higher than any, even than that of Creator; the others command our reverence, but this, purchased by His own self-denying assumption of our nature, and sufferings in it unto death, claims our gratitude; and that it may be honoured as it deserves, the Apostle tells us, that the Father hath decreed that at this Name *every knee should bow*, not of men only, but *in heaven and under the earth*, and that *every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord*, which, instead of derogating from, he assures us will add to, His *glory*. (Phil. ii. 9—11.) The angel explains the nature of the salvation; *He shall save His people from their sins*, a double cure, not only from their guilt and its consequences,



punishment, shame, and misery, but also from their dominion; for Sanctification or personal holiness, as well as Justification or forgiveness, is included in the Gospel covenant. None then can have a right to the privileges and consolations of believers, who are not humbled and grieved for their sins, and endeavouring, in reliance on God's cooperating grace, to subdue them. A deliverer not from temporal but from spiritual enemies, from sin, and from the evil spirit, the author of sin, must be divine. Joshua delivered Israel not by his own power, but as God's instrument, and he saved not his own people, but the people of God; whereas Jesus Himself, as the angel declares, shall by His own power *save His own people*. Such a Saviour, His people, with few exceptions, no longer expected or desired; but He had always been the hope of the pious Israelite, who with the patriarch, from whom he derived his name, could exclaim in death, *I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord!* (Gen. xlix. 18.) And such we know was the sense assigned to Jacob's passionate exclamation by the Targumist, who thus paraphrases it; "I wait not for the salvation of Gideon or of Samson, which are temporal, but for Thy salvation; for Thy deliverance, O Lord, is an Eternal deliverance."

Our Redeemer is now commonly called Jesus Christ, but to many to whom *He is precious*, and *altogether lovely*, as He must appear in the eyes of all who have the faintest notion of His pre-eminent excellence, and of their infinite obligation to Him, this connection of the words, from its resemblance to the name and surname of those among whom we live, sounds too familiar, unless accompanied by the title of Our Lord. Accurately speaking, His name is Jesus; and by this He was indiscriminately addressed upon earth. Christ, equivalent to the Hebrew Messiah, is His official designation, meaning one who is *anointed*, and would be applied to Him by none but those who acknowledged Him

as their Sovereign. In the Scriptures this distinction is carefully observed; but as, out of respect to our Lord, Jesus is never given as a baptismal name, it has obtained a sacred character, and in modern times either that or Christ is used of Him indifferently; but it is better to employ the former when we would draw attention to the salvation He has wrought for us, the latter when we would speak of His ministry, or dwell upon His dignity and His claims to our obedience as our King.

8. *The Birth at Bethlehem of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Matt. i. 25.*

Mary was probably very young, and her husband advanced in years. In obedience to the Divine command, he took her home, but *knew her not until she had brought forth her first-born Son*; and he called Him, as he had been instructed, *Jesus*. Thus her holy Offspring, *conceived of the Holy Ghost*, was literally the promised Seed of a Woman, and perfect Man, without any taint of the original sin, which is inherited by all the natural progeny of Adam. He was also born in wedlock, which preserved His virgin mother from disgrace; and the knowledge of the mystery was confined to Mary, her husband, and a few friends, until our Lord's Resurrection, and the formation of His Church required it to be divulged. This birth from a Virgin had been clearly foretold seven centuries before by Isaiah, (vii. 14.) and, more obscurely, by Jeremiah, (xxxi. 22.) *The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man*. The verse is so interpreted by most Christian, and by several Jewish, expositors, of whom the author of the Mishna deserves to be specified; and the connection in which it stands, the prediction of the return of the Jews, is favourable

to this opinion. Such an event, apparently impossible, none but a true prophet would venture to predict, and none but He who inspired the prophet could accomplish. The language of the Evangelist does not necessarily imply that she afterwards cohabited with her husband; her virginity is an ecclesiastical tradition, and we may at least infer that she had no other children, from our Lord's recommending her to the care of His beloved disciple, who in consequence took her to his home. The Nazarenes enumerated four of his brethren, (Matt. xiii. 55.) but we know that the Virgin had sisters; and as the term in Hebrew includes nephews and cousins-german, (Gen. xiii. 8. 2 Kings x. 13.) the supposition that they were the sons of Mary, or of Joseph by a former marriage, is not necessary, and the latter is incompatible with the hypothesis, that deduces our Lord's right to the throne of David through His mother the nearest of kin, after the demise of her husband. And we know that James, who became first Bishop of Jerusalem, called the *Lord's brother*, (Gal. i. 19.) was the son of Alpheus.

9, 10. *The two Genealogies of Christ.* Matt. i. Luke iii.

As the Messiah was to be the Son of David after the flesh, it became necessary to prove His descent, and accordingly the successive steps are recorded both by Matthew and Luke. These Genealogies, however, are so dissimilar, that they cannot, at least in the same sense, belong to one individual, for they are traced through two different sons of David, Solomon and Nathan; and they agree only in two descents, those of Salathiel and his son Zorobabel. It was an ancient opinion that both belonged to Joseph; that the first was his natural, the second his legal, pedigree; and this is reported by Africanus, a contemporary of Origen, on the

authority of some of our Lord's relations. But this is, I think with South, destructive of the main foundation of our religion; and it is not credible that these pedigrees should have been so understood by authors, who take care to inform us that Jesus was not the real, but only the reputed, Son of Joseph, and whose object it was to show, that the Messiah was not by adoption only the legal heir of David, but also *the fruit of his loins*, (Acts ii. 30.) The difficulty is removed by maintaining, that Joseph and Mary were both descended from David, and that the genealogy of the former is recorded by St. Matthew, and that of the latter by St. Luke: the former, writing for Jews, commences with Abraham their ancestor; the latter, writing for Gentiles, carries up the line to Adam, because all his descendants are interested in this Son of David; and this shows, that one deduced only His Title to the crown, the other His natural Descent. These Genealogies seem to have been transcribed from the public Registers, which we know continued to be kept in the time of Josephus; and if so, the Evangelists are not answerable for them. In that of Luke there appear to have been interpolations, as some early Christian writers made his generations seventy-two, and we have seventy-seven. He or his copyists follow the Septuagint, in inserting a second Cainan between Arphaxad and Sala; and dropping this and the third and fourth names from Nathan to Neri, which are omitted in many Manuscripts, we reduce them to that number. Matthew has omitted purposely three kings, the descendants of Athaliah, and also Jehoiakim, and it is thought some persons between Obed and Jesse, since it seems unlikely that four in succession should live above a century; but this is doubtful, for Matthew wished to arrange the Genealogy in three divisions of fourteen generations, the first and third of which should consist of private individuals, and the intermediate one of sovereigns; and the only reason for the omission in the

middle series seems to be, that in the two others the number was really fourteen. The only women named are memorable either as sinners or as gentiles: Thamar, guilty of incest, and Bathsheba, of adultery, Rahab, a Canaanite, and Ruth, a Moabite. To indicate, it may be, that as He descended both from sinners and gentiles, He is a Saviour for all without exception.

Mary is allowed by the Jews to be the Daughter of Eli, and her father having no son, her husband is reckoned to him, as it was not the national custom to trace a pedigree through a female; or, with Yardley<sup>u</sup> and others, we may thus paraphrase St. Luke; Jesus being (*as was supposed*) *the Son of Joseph*, but in reality the *Son* (i. e. the grandson) *of Heli*. The language of St. Matthew also shows that he did not mean to assert, in contradiction to his narrative, that Jesus was really the Son of Joseph; for in his instance alone he carefully avoids the term constantly used before, *begat*; writing, *Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was* (or had been) *born Jesus*; and Luke, as just observed, takes care to use a similar expression. South maintains, (vol. ii. p. 214. Oxford, 1842.) that the royal line of David by Solomon being extinct in Jeconiah, whom (Jer. xxii. 30.) God wrote *childless*, the right to his crown passed into the next line of Nathan in Salathiel. Solomon, according to this scheme, has no connexion with the Messiah; and the divines who follow him endeavour to show, that though the Jews believe that He must descend from him, there is no scriptural warrant for that opinion. They argue, that though God promised to Solomon, (1 Chron. xxii. 10.) that He would establish the throne of His kingdom for ever, yet it is not said in his seed; and that besides, the kingdom there spoken of was the spiritual kingdom, which his temporal

<sup>u</sup> The Genealogies critically examined, p. 225.

one only typified. Others, however, as Calvin, who, agreeing with the Jews, think it foretold that the Messiah should descend through Solomon, connect the two genealogies by assuming that Neri died without male issue, and that his daughter, heiress of the family of Nathan, united the two branches by marrying Salathiel, the eldest of Solomon's descendants. Upon this supposition, Jeconiah was the real father of Salathiel, and the latter is reckoned to Neri in the same way as Joseph is to Heli; and this appears to me to be the most satisfactory interpretation, since both Matthew and the Book of Chronicles (i. ii. 16.) maintain Salathiel's descent from him; and the expression on which South insists need not be taken literally, but understood only to mean that he should not beget a king like himself. Salathiel's son, Zorobabel, had two, Abiud and Rhesa, the ancestors respectively of Joseph and Mary, and the former line failing in him, his right passes over to his wife as now next of kin, and through her to Jesus, Who is thus shown to be the Heir, as well as the Son, of David. No descent can be more illustrious than that of the kings of Judah, who, according to promise, succeeded one another in an unbroken line of eighteen generations, a fact without a parallel in history, ancient or modern. This is strikingly contrasted by the kingdom of Israel governed by different families, only one of which was allowed to reach the fourth generation.

11. *The infant Saviour receives the homage of shepherds.*

*Luke ii. 8—20.*

Bethlehem, the predicted birthplace of the Messiah, a village six miles south of Jerusalem, is more than fifty from Nazareth. The Virgin, far advanced in her pregnancy, had no motive to take the journey, till the Emperor Augustus,

whose paramount authority superseded when he pleased such nominally independent sovereigns as Herod, ordered a census of the population, the time of which coincided with that of her delivery; and this enrolment by command of a foreign potentate was a badge of subjection, which proved, contrary to appearances, that the sceptre had now actually passed from Judah. We have in this decree a striking illustration of the mode in which the Omniscient and Almighty God accomplishes His purposes, without interfering with the free agency of His moral creatures. Persons were to be registered, not at their homes, but at the towns to which they legally belonged. Joseph therefore was under the necessity of travelling to Bethlehem. Mary accompanied him, according to some commentators, because she was an heiress, and had property there; others think that the census might require the appearance of women as well of men, as in Syria they both paid the capitation tax; or that she might judge it proper to avail herself of this providential opportunity of claiming her descent from David, as she knew herself to be miraculously with child of the Messiah.

The Taxing is mentioned by St. Luke not so much to mark the time of Christ's birth, as to prove that it took place at Bethlehem, and that Mary and His reputed father were at that time allowed to be descendants of the royal family of David; for the Scripture said, that *Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem.* (John vii. 12.) This registering was clearly made before the death of Herod; yet the Evangelist connects it with Quirinus, or, as he calls him in Greek, Cyrenius, who ten years after, being governor of Syria, made one on the deposition of Archelaus. As it cannot be supposed that the Evangelist has mistaken the time, some method of making his language consistent with the fact must be devised. Lardner's elaborate Dissertation, says Dr. Hales, considerably longer than Luke's whole

Gospel, offers only a choice of difficulties. Our version, *This taxing was first made*, seems to assert an impossibility, that the same taxation was twice made. Scaliger and other eminent critics translate, *This taxation was made before Cyrenius was governor of Syria*; and Mr. Greswell, who supports this interpretation, takes it as a parenthetical admonition, not to confound this with the later and more remarkable one. Lardner translates, *This was the first enrolment of Cyrenius*; and he supposes that that officer was sent from Rome for this purpose, and is designated by his subsequent appointment. The supposition, however, has no support from history, and seems hardly reconcileable with the text, which represents Cyrenius as actually governing at the time, and it appears to me that Hales is right in supposing that, *This taxing first took effect when Cyrenius was governing*, is the meaning which the Evangelist intended to convey. Josephus informs us, that Augustus had been provoked to write to Herod, that he would no longer treat him as a friend but as a subject; and he afterwards mentions, that the whole nation took an oath of fidelity to Cæsar, and to the king jointly. This was probably administered at the time of taking the census; but Augustus being reconciled to Herod, the tribute designed to follow was suspended, till Cyrenius, when governor of Syria, was ordered to confiscate the property of Archelaus. The word translated *all the world*, properly means *inhabited country*; it is generally applied to the Roman empire, but it is used for Judæa by Josephus, and in the Septuagint, and must be so restricted in this instance, as the historians mention no census of the population of the whole of Augustus's dominions, though they do of the numbering of Roman citizens. *All* may be added to show, that Galilee was included.

Thus He, *Who for our sakes, though rich, became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich*, was pleased to



commence a life of indigence, the whole course of which ennobles poverty, and exposes the vanity of earthly distinctions. Had our Lord appeared, as was expected, as a king, or had He even been born in a wealthy family in private life, He could not have exhibited several of the virtues which distinguished Him; His example would not have been so extensively useful, and the great and rich would have been still more tempted than they are at present to despise their poor brethren, for whom He became incarnate and died, no less than for them. His birth, however, though His rank was low, and the town in which it took place was humble, was marked by higher honours than have been conferred upon any other. It was unnoticed by the great of this world, but it was announced by a heavenly messenger to *shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks by night*, and the intelligence was declared to be a subject of *great joy to all the people*. *Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord*; and as the angel would address them in their own language, we may suppose he used the name *Jehovah*, and if so, they must have understood that the *Babe in swaddling clothes*, to Whom they were directed, was the Incarnate Deity. Even if *Lord* was pronounced instead of the sacred name, it indicates in this connection, though it does not plainly assert, the Divinity of the Babe of Bethlehem. Any doubt that might arise on hearing of so extraordinary an event must have been dispelled, when *suddenly a multitude of other ministering spirits joined the angel*; and this *army of heaven praised God*, by declaring, that the birth of this Infant, which would promote *His glory in the highest heaven*, would be on earth the proof of *good will*, and the cause of *peace to men* \*. Peace in the lower sense of mutual kindness of disposition and action between those who are, by partaking

\* There is a remarkable various reading, which has been followed by the Vulgate, "to men of good will," but it is probably erroneous.

of a common nature, brethren, is an effect of genuine Christianity, which no human principle has ever produced in an equal degree ; but it must here be taken in its highest sense, for the reconciliation of a justly offended God and guilty men, which He, who is emphatically designated as *our Peace*, came into the world to accomplish ; and this comprehends both the former, and that inward peace of mind *passing all understanding*, which the world can neither give nor take away. Having been apprised where they should find their Lord, the shepherds hastened to pay Him homage, and *returned* to their occupation with thankful hearts, *glorifying and praising God*. They made known the intelligence they had received from the Angel, which caused in the hearers a temporary wonder, but Mary *pondered them in her heart*. As Bethlehem was on this occasion crowded with visitors in better circumstances than Joseph and his betrothed bride, *there was no room for them in the apartments in the inn*. The Saviour of the world, therefore, made His first appearance as man in His own peculiar country, in which He never possessed even the meanest home,—in a *stable*<sup>y</sup>.

[B.C. 5.] Neither the year nor day of our Saviour's birth is ascertained ; and Scaliger, a high authority in chronology, classes it among the mysteries that will never be discovered. Our present mode of computation, which did not come into general use till the eighth century, was invented early in the sixth by Dionysius Exiguus, a Roman Abbot, who chose to date his Paschal cycle from this event, instead of the then received æra of Diocletian, or, as it is oftener called, of the Martyrs. Unfortunately, he assumed his date of the Nativity upon reasonings, which more accurate investigations have proved to be erroneous, and chronologers are now agreed, that he has placed it about four years after the time. The day also is unknown ; for though the Roman Church has

<sup>y</sup> φάτνη, manger, A. T.

commemorated this event on the 25th of December from the time of Constantine, it was probably induced to appoint it by the wish of consecrating the Saturnalia; and in this, as in other instances, converting a Pagan into a Christian festival. We learn from Chrysostom, that this custom had been introduced into the East from the West, for the Greeks originally kept this feast on the sixth of January, together with that of the Epiphany, because they imagined that the star first appeared to the Magi in their own country, on the night of the Saviour's nativity. But this date cannot stand examination, for it assumes as its basis, that the father of the Baptist was the high priest, and that it was on the day of atonement that Gabriel appeared to him; whereas the text itself contradicts this scheme, for it calls Zacharias a *certain* priest, and mentions both his course and his residence; and the high priest was not reckoned of any, and lived always in Jerusalem. Some modern critics, therefore, assign it to the feast of Tabernacles, or the day of Atonement, in the autumn of the year of Rome, 749; or to the spring following. The nature of this work precludes the discussion of the question; but I refer those who take an interest in it to a Dissertation by Mr. Greswell, who advances, as a conjecture, that the day of the Nativity is that on which the paschal lamb was set apart preparatory to its sacrifice, that is, on the tenth of Nisan, answering to the fifth of April, 750, four years before the vulgar æra. There is, he observes, no fact in our Lord's history, not altogether consistent with His birth about the vernal equinox; and, certainly, either that or the autumnal one is more suitable than the winter solstice, both to the taking of the census, and to the keeping of sheep in the fields at night. Scaliger's preference of autumn, is based upon this fact, that when Judas Maccabæus restored the temple worship, the service was performed by the first company of Priests. The rest succeeding in turn, it is calculated that the course of Abia would

attend in July or August, and as Mary saw the Angel in the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy, in January, she might bring forth our Saviour in the September following.

12. *Circumcision and Presentation of Christ in the Temple.*  
*Luke ii. 21—38.*

Our Lord "took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance" only. He was therefore exempt from the birth-sin, inherited by "every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam," and, accordingly, needed not that renewal of His nature which Circumcision denotes. Still, as the seed of Abraham, to whom it was given as a seal of the covenant of faith, and as *born under the Law*, it was fit that He should comply with this as well as its other ordinances; and as His mission was to the Jews, He could not fulfil it without attending the Temple service and the Synagogue, from which the omission of this ceremony would have excluded Him. Upon the same principle, His Virgin Mother submitted to the Purification prescribed by the Law, though an exception from all the rest of her sex. It was evident that she was a mother, and it was not expedient that she should claim exemption by announcing her miraculous conception. A lamb was required for a burnt-offering, and a turtle dove or a young pigeon for a sin-offering; but the kind consideration which characterises the Mosaic Law, accepted another bird instead of the lamb from those to whom that would be too expensive. (Lev. xii.) The fact that the Virgin offered the latter seems to prove, that the Magi had not yet presented their gifts. Gratitude for deliverance from "the great pain and peril of childbirth" might naturally call for a thankful acknowledgment; but the reasonableness of a sin-offering can be understood only by him who believes with the Psalmist, (Ps. li.) that he is *shapen in wickedness*,

*and in sin hath his mother conceived him.* The Law was continually teaching the fundamental doctrine, Original Sin, by declaring that a mother continued unclean for forty days, and that seven days must elapse before her son who was born in that condition could be admitted into covenant with God. It is most remarkable, that the time was doubled if the child was a female; and the reason seems to us to be, as plainly as if it had been recorded, because it was not Adam but Eve, who *being deceived was in the transgression*, and was the first to yield to the temptation of the Devil.

As Jesus was a first-born son, the Law (Ex. xiii.) required that He should be presented to the Lord and redeemed. An event occurred upon the occasion which must have strengthened Mary's faith and hope; for when she and Joseph brought Him for that purpose, Simeon, one of the spiritual worshippers, who were waiting for the birth of this *Consolation of Israel*, and to whom it had been revealed that he should not die till he had seen the Lord's Christ, was influenced by the Holy Spirit to enter the temple. Taking up in his arms the infant Saviour, he was endowed with the gift of prophecy, which, as we have seen in the instances of Zacharias and the Virgin, was now, after a suspension of four centuries, granted to a favoured few. The Song of Simeon rises above the two preceding ones in interest<sup>y</sup>. The Virgin gave vent to her personal feelings, and her subject closes with the birth of the Messiah. Zacharias opens a prospective but limited field of vision; but while the *Consolation of Israel* had been Simeon's hope through life, and its arrival the signal for his peaceful dissolution, he sees with a prophetic glance, like Isaiah, (xlii. 6. xlix. 6—9.) the removal of the veil from the understanding and affections of the Gentiles, and rejoices not only that the Saviour will be the *glory of His own people Israel*, but that He is also given as *a Light to lighten the Gentiles*, to

<sup>y</sup> Bp. Jebb, Sacred Literature, pp. 418—428.

*be the Lord's Salvation to the ends of the earth.* He then blessed Joseph and his Mother, but moderates the expectation he might have raised of the universal welcome that awaited such a Child, by predicting, that *He is set for the fall as well as the rising again of many in Israel*, and that *through Him the thoughts of many hearts would be revealed*, for *He would be for a sign which shall be spoken against and opposed.* He adds, that she herself shall be pierced by a javelin; but appears to allude not to her death, but to anguish of mind. Simeon's testimony was corroborated by that of Anna, *a prophetess*, an aged and devout widow, *who served God with fastings and prayers night and day.* She was constant in her attendance in the temple, and now not only joined in thanksgiving, but also spake of the Infant as the Messiah *to all in Jerusalem who looked for Redemption.*

13. *The Eastern Magi bring offerings as an homage to the new-born King of the Jews. Joseph by divine direction conducts the Virgin and her Son into Egypt, to avoid the fury of Herod, who, in order to destroy Jesus, massacred all the male infant children of Bethlehem. The Holy Family, after his death, settles at Nazareth. Matt. ii.*

The prophecy of Simeon soon began to be fulfilled in the arrival of strangers, whom a star, seen by them in their own country, induced to seek Him who had been so lately proclaimed *a Light to lighten the Gentiles.* The period of their arrival is unknown; but the twelfth day after the Nativity, on which it is celebrated, seems too early even for a journey from Arabia, from which Justin Martyr and Tertullian would bring them, instead of from the further East; and I think it must have been at the soonest after the Presentation. Some

harmonists fix it to the following year, and they assume, as it is said that Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth, that it was to make arrangements for removing to Bethlehem. They might think the education of her Son in the place in which His birth had been providentially brought to pass, was necessary to His acknowledgment as the Messiah; and we know that they would have fixed there on their return, if God had not interfered to prevent it. The age of the children marked out for death is also thought to require, that Jesus should be at the time of the command at least entering upon His second year; for if He had been born only twelve or forty days, it seems that even so cruel a tyrant as Herod would not have been guilty of such a wanton act, as to put to death those among whom the object of his alarm could not have been included.

An angel had revealed to Jewish shepherds the birth of their King; and the same happy event, in which the Gentiles were equally interested, was indicated to eastern sages by a different but no less manifest interposition of Divine Providence. In the original they are called Magi, whence the word Magician, but the two have no resemblance but in name; for the former studied nature to discover the properties and uses of God's creatures, the latter, that they might procure superhuman power by compelling spirits to execute their will. They were not idolaters like other heathen, but worshipped only one God, under the emblem of fire, though they magnified His benevolence by diminishing His power, too large a share of which they ascribed to the Evil Principle. And in a subsequent age, this doctrine, called, from the Persian heresiarch Manes, Manicheism, for a long season corrupted the Church. The studies of the Magi must have been innocent, for Daniel, who had risked his life because he would not break the Law, did not scruple to preside over those of Babylon. (v. 11.) A notion early prevailed, that these first-fruits of the Gentile

Church were kings; but it is unsupported by the narrative of the Evangelist, and apparently originated from the application to them of a passage in the seventy-second Psalm, which, though written with an immediate reference to Solomon, is allowed to be prophetic of that Son of David, Who is in the fullest sense the King of Israel. The words are, *The kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts*, and they also led to the belief that they were Arabians. The religion of Zoroaster might have had some professors of it there, but Persia, where it was the established religion, was its chief seat; and I conceive that these Magi came from that empire, and probably from Mesopotamia, the country of Abraham and of Balaam, whose prediction of the Star that was to come out of Jacob, might have kept alive there the expectation of a Jewish Sovereign of the world. The journey these Magi so readily undertook shows their piety; and as they were afterwards warned by God, it seems not improbable that the reason of the first appearance of the star had been revealed to them. Whatever were the causes, as the time drew nigh, Gentiles as well as Jews, the West no less than the East, were looking forward to the reign of an Universal Sovereign. Virgil had already, in language apparently borrowed from the Hebrew Scriptures, announced in an application complimentary to Augustus Cæsar the approaching fulfilment of the Poem of the Cumæan Sybill, when a new Progeny should be sent down from Heaven, and nature would rejoice in the happiness of the future age; and this prediction, which must have been current before in Italy, had previously excited the ambition of Lentulus, and involved him in Catiline's conspiracy. In Asia, observes Suetonius in his life of Vespasian, it was an ancient and constant opinion, that Sovereignty should belong to one who came out of Judæa; and Tacitus (Hist. v. 13.) reports, that many were persuaded, that it was recorded in the ancient



writings of the Priests, by which he must mean the Jewish Scriptures, that the East should prevail, (*Oriens ralesceret.*) According to him, it was in a great degree owing to this notion that Vespasian obtained the Empire, and it was by applying to him the predictions respecting the Messiah that Josephus obtained his favour. The term *East* is remarkable, for it is the Latin version of *Branch* in the prophecy of Zechariah, (iii. 8.) rendered in the Septuagint Ἀνατολή, Day-spring, and in either sense really belongs of right to Him alone, who is both *a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch out of his roots*, (Isaiah xi. 1.) and that *Sun of righteousness*, (Malachi iv. 2.) of whom Isaiah (lx. 3.) prophesied that the *Gentiles should come to His light*.

The enquiry of the Magi in the capital of Judæa for the new-born King of the Jews with reason alarmed Herod, for, as a descendant of Esau, he had no title to the crown, which was the gift of foreigners and idolaters, through whose power he reigned; and he was hated by his subjects. It is added, *all Jerusalem with Him*; for the Jews expected that the reign of the Messiah would be ushered in by a train of calamities, and they had had sufficient experience of their sovereign's disposition to know, that no mercy or scruples would withhold him from the performance of any act of atrocity which his fear might prompt.

By an inconsistent yet not unexampled mixture of belief in prophecy and the hope of defeating it, Herod first ascertained from an assembly of the priests and scribes, that Bethlehem was the birth-place of the true King of Israel, and then planned His destruction. The Magi acted upon the information obtained at Jerusalem, and as they were on their way to Bethlehem, the star again appeared, and standing over the house where the Babe was, precluded the possibility of mistake. This decides that it could not have been a real star, but was a meteor, moving at no great height. The

total absence of the magnificence that they might expect was no stumbling-block to these faithful Gentiles, for their joy is expressed by the Evangelist in the strongest terms. They did homage, nothing doubting, to the infant King, whom they came to honour, after the fashion of the East, by prostrating themselves before Him, and presenting suitable gifts; and as three articles are specified, *gold, frankincense, and myrrh*, the Magi, it is concluded, without any other reason, were no more in number. Thus Jesus was acknowledged as a King in the place of His nativity by a chosen few of Jews and Gentiles, by the Shepherds, and by the Magi. Herod's craftiness seems to have deserted him. By trusting to their fidelity, instead of sending with them spies under the pretence of honouring them, his plan was frustrated; for though their intention was to return to Jerusalem, it was altered in consequence of a divine intimation. Herod, exasperated by disappointment, put to death all the male children in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood, who might be supposed to have been born since the time mentioned. The atrocious act only plunged him deeper into guilt; for the Infant he sought to slay was not to die before the appointed time, or by any but the appointed instruments; and before the command was issued, was secure beyond his reach; for an angel, probably Gabriel, had previously warned Joseph to *flee into Egypt with the young Child and His mother*. Thus Mary's espousals with him had been the means of raising up a protector for them in the ordinary course of events; and the oblations of the eastern sages enabled them to bear the expense of a journey, and of a short residence in a foreign land.

It seems extraordinary, that the first effect of the Saviour's birth, announced as it had been by angels as *tidings of great joy*, should be to plunge in sorrow many a mother, by the indiscriminate slaughter of all the babes that had been born

within two years in the same town. They would not be comforted, because their children were not; but a moment's reflection will satisfy all who, like us, believe that the death of this Babe of Bethlehem was an atonement for original as well as actual guilt, that to these "Innocents" this early removal from a world of sin and suffering was their unspeakable gain; and we can see, that the massacre that left Jesus the sole survivor, clearly marked Him out, at the proper period, as the only Bethlehemite who could claim to be the Messiah; and meanwhile by causing His flight into Egypt, it both secured Him from other attempts to cut Him off prematurely, and enabled Him to grow up in the obscurity required before the commencement of His public ministry. The place of their abode is not mentioned, but tradition names Heliopolis, as the Greeks called On, where Onias the high priest, rejected on the establishment of the Maccabæan Sovereigns, had founded a temple. Wherever it might be, as Egypt then abounded with Jews, (according to Philo they were no less than a million,) they were not compelled to associate only with foreigners, and their exile could not have been long; for, upon Herod's death, they returned, according to the instructions conveyed to them by an angel, but not as they intended, to Bethlehem, then in the dominions of his eldest surviving son Archelaus, but to Nazareth, in those of his brother Herod Antipas, the original home of Joseph and of Mary, deterred probably by the cruel character of the former, who would have had no scruple in following up the designs of his father against Jesus.

14. *Jesus, when twelve years of age, questions and answers the Doctors in the Temple. Luke ii. 41—52.*

At Nazareth the Saviour grew up in obscurity, His birth-place, and the wonders which had revealed His real dignity

to a few chosen witnesses of Jewish and Gentile extraction, being alike unknown to the nation. It is said, that He grew *strong in spirit*, and was *filled with wisdom*; but how and by what degrees the indwelling Deity communicated wisdom and holiness to His human nature, it is unprofitable, and seems to be presumptuous, to conjecture. It is natural to desire to know some particulars of the Saviour's childhood; and the authors of the false gospels undertake to gratify this wish. The anecdotes they detail, however, silly or mischievous miracles, are so absurd, that they carry with them their own refutation; and we may be sure, since the information we wish has been withheld, that it was not expedient that it should be recorded. St. John could have given us from the Virgin a full and particular account; but his object, and that of all the Evangelists, was the public ministry, not the private life, of the Saviour. He takes care to tell us, that the changing of the water into wine was His first miracle, and this seems to be an indirect contradiction of the reputed ones of His infancy, which, though committed to writing long after, might be already in circulation. We know in general, that He was obedient to Joseph and Mary; and as He was called the Carpenter, (Mark vi. 3.) He probably assisted His reputed father in his trade; and made ploughs and yokes, as reported by Justin Martyr. Joseph's circumstances rendered this imperative, but, if they had not, he would have been bound to provide Him with the means of maintaining Himself by an handicraft employ. The indispensable duties of a Jewish father to a son, were to circumcise him, to redeem him, to teach him the Law, and to instruct him in some occupation. Thus Paul, as a tent maker, maintained himself and his companions; and Maimonides says of the wise men of Israel, that some of them were hewers of wood, and others drawers of water. Only a single incident of His youth is preserved. Joseph,

as a conscientious Israelite, went up yearly to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and his wife was in the habit of accompanying him, although the Law did not require the attendance of females. When Jesus was twelve years old, He went up with them; and His age is mentioned, because that at which it was customary to admit youths into the congregation by a ceremony, corresponding to Confirmation in the Christian Church. The festival being over, they returned, and journeying in a company, as is still the custom of the east, did not discover that He had remained behind, till the members of each family, who might have been apart during the day, met together for the night. They went back to Jerusalem in quest of Him, where they found Him in some chamber of the temple, questioning and answering the teachers of the Law, and with such wisdom and propriety, as to astonish all who heard Him. The common notion, that He disputed with the doctors, derived from some commentators, and strengthened by paintings, receives no countenance from the text. His reply, *How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I ought to be in My Father's house?*<sup>2</sup> might be designed to reprove His mother for assigning that title to Joseph, and seems to intimate, that they had not been sufficiently attentive to the various circumstances that designated His future office.

The whole of the preceding history has been boldly rejected by modern Anti-Trinitarians, and is printed in their new version in Italics, as if it were of doubtful authority, although the editors are obliged to allow, that these chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke have been found in all unmutated manuscripts and in the early versions. The facts they contain are also referred to both by the earliest Christian authors, and by the earliest opponents of Christianity; and it

<sup>2</sup> The omission of the substantive seems to me to be better supplied by *house* than *business*.

deserves to be considered, that a prominent topic of discussion between those who favoured and those who opposed Jesus, was, His descent from David, and His birth in the city of that king, the proofs of which are only to be found in these chapters which they treat as spurious additions, though they cannot give any plausible account of the origin of the assumed forgery. The phrase 'Εν δὲ ταῖς ἡμεραῖς, with which they would commence St. Matthew's Gospel, like 'Εν ᾧτε δὲ πάντα καὶ δεκάτῳ in that of St. Luke, implies that something had preceded; nor would Matthew have said, (iv. 13.) *Jesus leaving Nazareth*, unless he had mentioned before, (ii. 23.) that *He came and dwelt* there. The internal objections, then, that is, the fabulous nature, as it is assumed, of the Narrative, and the mode in which Prophecy is applied, are the only ones worthy of notice. But these will not justify our rejection of what the whole Christian world, till our own days, has agreed to receive as Scripture, since this fabulous nature is a mere assertion, and the objections to the Prophecies may be shown to be unfounded. I would remark, as to the first, that the very nature of the narrative requires the intervention of Angels, and that no more of the wonderful is introduced than was indispensable; and if such objections are to determine the genuineness of the text, we should on this principle reject the Temptation, and the testimony of Angels to the Resurrection.

It is also argued, that the Massacre at Bethlehem must be a fabrication, because unnoticed by historians; but Josephus, the only author who could be expected to record it, compiled his narrative from the partial account of Herod's minister Nicolaus, and therefore is likely to be silent. The transaction too, however horrible, might not be of sufficient notoriety or importance to find its way into history. Michaelis estimates the number slain under twenty; but, without affecting an accuracy for which we have not

sufficient data, we may observe, that as Bethlehem was a small place, and as the infants were exclusively males, the slaughter was probably not so great as is commonly supposed. Still some indistinct intimations of this slaughter have been transmitted to us. Cedrenus says, that Herod was distinguished by the title of Child-slayer; and Macrobius furnishes this heathen testimony: “when Augustus heard, that *among the children*, whom Herod king of the Jews ordered to be slain in Syria, his own son was also put to death, he said in Greek, by a play upon the words which are untranslatable, the two differing only in one letter, *ὄν—ὄν*: It is better to be Herod’s hog than his son.” His eldest son Antipater he did kill for a conspiracy, only five days before his own death; and in the repetition of the story some ages after, it is not unnatural that such an event should be confounded with the Bethlehem massacre. We know that Herod, who had already put to death his favourite wife and three sons, made it a dying request to his sister, that there should be a general slaughter of the principal persons in the nation, that those who would otherwise have rejoiced at his funeral, might be compelled to mourn. Surely then we need have no scruple in believing, that such a wretch would command any crime, that could gratify his resentment or strengthen his authority. It is remarkable, that, incredible as it may seem to some, it had a precedent in Roman history, and that within his own knowledge. A Sibylline oracle had announced, that Nature was about to bring forth a king of the Romans, in the very year of the birth of Augustus<sup>a</sup>; and the prediction so terrified the Senate, that they decreed, that all males born within that period should be exposed. The senators, whose wives were pregnant, had influence sufficient to prevent the registering the decree; but it deserves notice,

<sup>a</sup> Suetonius, Aug. 4.

that it originated from similar apprehensions, and that the act was only prevented by individual feeling; and that in those unhappy times, when human life was so little valued, that the exposure of infants was an ordinary event, their slaughter would not produce the same sensation as in a Christian or even Mahometan country.

The second objection, which affects only the first Gospel, is, that the author of the introductory chapters assigned to Matthew, has brought forward as testimony to Jesus passages from the Prophets, which the context shows to have been fulfilled in other persons; and the candid advocate must allow, that the application of some is far from obvious, and is open to critical difficulties. Yet the same mode of applying Scripture is found in other parts of this Gospel, the authenticity of which has never been called in question, as the transfer to our Lord of the Psalmist's declaration, (lxxviii. 2.) *I will open my mouth in parables*, (Matt. xiii. 35.) An objector of equal candour must also grant, that the application is made after the manner of Jewish commentators; and if other arguments are of sufficient weight to establish the authenticity of the narrative, we are bound to acquiesce in the authority of an inspired author, though it may not be to our judgment convincing; for "the Lord seems purposely (Scott on Isaiah vii.) to cast an obscurity over some of the most remarkable predictions in Scripture, as a trial of our humility, and to prove whether we will receive and profit by what is obvious, though we cannot satisfactorily solve every difficulty, or whether we will proudly reject the whole on that account." There are divines, whose orthodoxy is above suspicion, who consider several of the citations from the Old Testament in the New as accommodated to subjects which they were never intended to predict; as modern preachers, by detaching verses from the context, sometimes in their sermons give a new and not strictly appropriate meaning



to Scripture. And “to deny this,” says Dr. Pye Smith<sup>b</sup>, “would be to refuse the Apostles and Evangelists that liberty of observing striking coincidences, and of making useful applications, which writers of all ages have exercised.” But he proceeds with a caution against the abuse of the practice. “We should be slow to admit this solution, and well consider the probability, that in such cases there may be a ground of appropriation, the inobservance of which is solely owing to our ignorance of some circumstance in the *original* intent of the passage;” and he adds, “when it is introduced explicitly as an assertion of fact or doctrine, or as a prophecy, we must admit the propriety of the application, to the full extent to which it is carried by the sacred writer.” Now the two citations, the application of which to Jesus we find most difficulty in allowing, are thus introduced, *That it might be fulfilled, Out of Egypt have I called my Son*; (Hosea xi. 1.) and, *Then was fulfilled, In Rama there was a voice heard, &c.* (Jer. xxxi. 15.) A distinction has been made between the two forms, and it is maintained, that the first indicates that the passage cited is a prophecy, the second that it is no more than an accommodation, and that in the same manner the Talmud and Rabbinical works use the one for proof, the other for illustration. The remark is not very satisfactory, and in the instances before us, the Evangelist’s application of the passage in Hosea does not seem to be a more direct prophecy than that of Jeremiah. But this system, not so much of interpreting as explaining away the Scripture, will not be required here, if, as I conceive, the two passages may be shown to have had a double fulfilment, of which the secondary is the more important, and the more exact one. The calling up out of Egypt, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, of Israel, the adopted son of God, prefigured

<sup>b</sup> Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, i. p. 169.

the future bringing up out of the same country of His real Son by generation; the one, to enter upon the possession of the earthly Canaan; the other, by His sufferings in the same land, to obtain for Himself and His people a right to the enjoyment of its antitype, Heaven. The literal sense, says Lowth, "does more properly belong to Jesus than to Israel, which is observable in many other prophecies, which can be but improperly applied to those of whom they were first spoken, and, taking them in their true and genuine sense, are only fulfilled in Christ." Rachel, who lay buried between Rama and Bethlehem, is represented by Jeremiah as weeping and inconsolable for the death of her children. The primary reference appears to be to the Babylonian captivity; but the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem, whom we may presume to be her descendants, since the town was on the confines of the tribe of her son Benjamin, now intermingled with that of Judah, is the full accomplishment of the prediction; and this is rendered the more probable to any one who will read through the chapter, which comforts both Israel and Judah with the promise of a better covenant, and includes that obscure intimation of the Messiah's miraculous conception, which I have already noticed.

*He shall be called a Nazarene*, presents a difficulty of another description, for it is not found in the Old Testament. We know that in our Lord's time the bad character of the Nazarenes had become proverbial: for when Philip (John i. 45.) said to Nathaniel, *We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write*, the reply even of that Israelite without guile was, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* It appears then, that the residence and presumed birth of Jesus in that town contributed to His rejection. The interpretation, therefore, which takes it as equivalent to a despised person, appears to be the best; and we shall allow, that in this sense He is virtually, though not

actually, predicted in many passages as a Nazarene; and this view is supported by the language of the Evangelist, who does not refer to any specific passage, but generally to the Prophets.

St. Matthew expressly declares, that the naming of the Messiah Jesus, is the fulfilment of Isaiah's declaration to king Ahaz, that *the Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son*, and that *they shall call His name Immanuel, God with us*: and this celebrated prophecy has ever been regarded by the Church as evidence of the miraculous conception, and of the divine nature, of the promised Deliverer. Efforts were early made to deprive us of this valuable testimony; and the attempt has been zealously revived by the modern Anti-Trinitarians. Thus Jewish critics have endeavoured to show, that *Almah*, the word that here occurs, is not necessarily restricted to this meaning; and Aquila, a proselyte from Christianity to Judaism in the second century, in his translation of the Scriptures into Greek, substituted for the *παρθένος*, *virgin*, of the Septuagint, *νεᾱνίς*, *young woman*. I apprehend that the attempt is a failure, and that the ordinary interpretation must be retained; for a young woman's bearing a child is too common an event to have been called a sign, and would hardly have been announced with such solemnity. The advocates of this opinion differ with respect to the young woman intended; some supposing her to be the Queen, and others the wife of the prophet; but Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, to whom upon the first supposition it would be applied, had been born before, and as Isaiah calls Judæa *Emmanuel's land*, he cannot refer that title to a future child of his own. It is objected, that our Lord was never called Emmanuel; but it is well known, that, by a common figure of language not peculiar to Hebrew, it may mean that He shall be entitled to that appellation, that is, be what it denotes, *God manifest in the flesh*. He would be called

by this name, as much as Solomon was by that of Jedidiah; and though it was not applied to Him while on earth, He has been actually invoked under it in the hymns of many subsequent generations. Bishop Pearson considers it as comprehended in that of Jesus, for what else, says he, is *God with us*, than God our Saviour, which is the real meaning of Jesus? The objection appears to me to be frivolous, and the prophecy, as quoted by the Evangelist, would require no further vindication, did not the context involve it in difficulties; for it seems to declare that the Son promised should be born within the year, and that the political deliverance announced to Ahaz should take place before this Child should have reached the age in which He would be able to discriminate between different kinds of food. When it is contended that this is a direct prophecy of the Messiah, the question arises, how an event that would not happen till more than seven centuries had elapsed, could be a sign or assurance of another event, which was to take place within three years. It may be answered, that the promise of His birth in a distant age included of necessity an assurance of the continuance of the nation which He was to rule, and of the royal house from which He was to spring, and was therefore, by inference, a sign of deliverance from the present Syrian invasion; and to strengthen this argument, it is maintained, that the sign was not intended for Ahaz himself, who refused to ask one, but for his remote descendants. Dr. Kennicott's paraphrase<sup>d</sup> assumes that the text contains two distinct prophecies, to be understood in one sense only, the first relating to Christ, the second to Isaiah's own son. "*Behold, the Virgin* (the only one thus circumstanced) *shall conceive, and bear a Son, and this Son, Who shall be called Emmanuel, God with us, shall be also truly man, and shall eat milk and honey, that is, the ordinary food of infants, till*

<sup>d</sup> Sermon on Is. vii. 13—16. before the University, 1765.

*He shall grow up, to know how to refuse the evil and choose the good. But before this child* (pointing to his own son, whom he might hold in his arms) *shall know how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.* The child's name, Shear-Jashub, *the remainder shall return*, is evidently prophetic. The prophecy was soon after fulfilled, and therefore this son, whose name had been so consolatory the year before, might with the utmost propriety be brought forward now, to mark the period when Syria and Israel here spoken of as one kingdom, on account of their present confederacy, should be forsaken of both their kings, which, though at that time highly improbable, came to pass about two years after, when these two kings, who had in vain attempted to conquer Jerusalem, were themselves destroyed, each in his own country." The prophet was commanded to take this child with him, of whom no use was made unless in this application; and in the next chapter he declares, that both *his children were for signs*. Those who are dissatisfied with this assumed transition from the one child to the other, and think that the prediction requires that the sign should shortly take place, may approve of Dathe's interpretation, that Isaiah pointed out some virgin then present, who he prophesied should bring forth a son for a confirmation of the promise given, who would be a type of the Birth of Christ of the Virgin Mary, as the Brasen Serpent was of His Crucifixion, and Jonah of His three days' abode in the grave. The former is to me convincing, since it alone explains the conception of the Virgin, whom it is difficult to refer to any contemporary of the Prophet; and we should also bear in mind, that this declaration is not insulated, but is connected by the Prophet with the promise of that Son, Who was to establish for ever the throne of David, and Whom He calls Wonderful, and the Mighty God. And this connection

satisfies me, that though we may not be able to remove all critical difficulties, it is a direct prediction of the miraculous conception and divine nature of our Saviour.

Whatever objections, however, may be urged against the application to our Lord of the other passages of the Prophets cited in these chapters by St. Matthew, it will be found impossible to explain away the plain declaration of Micah, which is referred to Him by the Chaldee Targum, and the most eminent Jewish commentators, and is authenticated by that Jewish synod, as it may be called, convened by Herod, to ascertain His birth-place. This, perhaps the most important single prophecy in the Old Testament respecting the personal character of the blessed Seed of the Woman, crowns the whole chain of prophecies descriptive of His several limitations to the line of Shem, to the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the tribe of Judah, and to the royal house of David, terminating in His birth at Bethlehem, the city of that Prince. It forms, therefore, the basis of the New Testament, which begins with His human birth, the miraculous circumstances attending which are recorded in these two introductions. St. Matthew, however, quotes only the part of the prophecy which his purpose required; and I here insert the remainder, which as explicitly declares the eternal generation and consequently proper Deity of the Babe of Bethlehem, with which St. John begins his Gospel, while the conclusion carries us on to the conversion and restoration of all Israel, and His universal dominion even unto the ends of the earth.

*But His issuings forth are from old,  
From days of eternity.*

*Therefore He will give them up [for a season]*

*Until the time that she which shall bear have borne.*

*Then shall the residue of thy brethren (the Jews) return  
Along with the sons of Israel.*

*And He shall stand and guide them  
 In the strength of Jehovah,  
 In the majesty of the name of Jehovah His God;  
 And when they return He shall be magnified  
 Unto the ends of the earth.\**

15. *The Ministry of John the Baptist.* Matt. iii. Mark i.  
 Luke iii.

Christ sent forth His Apostles *into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature*, but His own mission was confined to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*. As a *minister of the circumcision*, our great High Priest entered upon His office at thirty years of age, the time appointed by the Law, and like the typical priests of the order of Aaron, He was consecrated by Baptism. His mission required to be notified and accredited, and John the Baptist had come into the world for the sole purpose of announcing Him as the Messiah, and preparing the nation for His reception. Such a preparation which had not been thought necessary on the introduction of the former dispensation, marked the superior importance of this; and it was heightened still more by the fact, that the coming also of this herald had been predicted both by Isaiah and by Malachi. By the former as a Voice that was to proclaim the Incarnate God, by the latter as the Messenger who was to prepare the way of Jehovah. With the promise of his coming as Elijah, he closes the volume of Prophecy, bidding the nation to remember the Law of Moses, since they would have no other guide during the period that was to precede the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. After this interval of centuries, the Spirit of Prophecy visited the Baptist's father, and he hinted the accomplishment of these predictions in his Child, whom he

\* This is Dr. Hales' translation. Analysis of Chronology, vol. ii. p. 463.

declared to be the Prophet of the Highest, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins. The person chosen was well fitted for his office by the austerity of his character and the self-denial of his life, but though a Priest, he opened his preparatory commission, not in the temple, but in the wilderness. Men of all ranks, however different in conduct and opinion, flocked to him as a religious guide; and the reverence in which he was universally held would predispose all to receive his testimony. The time also of the coming of the Messiah was the one which had been predicted, and therefore it is accurately specified by St. Luke. It was in the fifteenth year of the Emperor Tiberius<sup>f</sup> that John, who was six months older than Jesus, began to prepare His way; and Greswell has with probability assigned for its commencement the fifth of October, (A. D. 26,) the day on which as he calculates he had completed his thirtieth birth-day. In these thirty years the political state of the country had been entirely changed. The Sceptre had passed away from Judah shortly after the birth of Shiloh, this Apostle of God to whom it of right belonged, by the death of Herod the Great; for though Herod Antipas and Philip retained the portions of his kingdom which he had assigned to them, Archelaus, after a tyrannical administration, had been deposed and banished, and Judæa, Samaria, and Idumæa, his share, had been for twelve years avowedly a Roman province. The period is further marked by the pontificate of Annas and Caiaphas. The Law acknowledged only one high priest; it is therefore supposed that Annas, who had been deposed A. D. 24, was now the deputy; but whether or not he had any real authority, his influence, as

<sup>f</sup> If we reckon his reign from the death of Augustus, Jesus would have been thirty-two years of age at His baptism, which does not seem reconcilable with the statement that He was about thirty; but the difficulty will be removed if the reign of Tiberius be dated from his predecessor's associating him in the empire with himself two years earlier.



having had both sons and sons-in-law for successors, must have been great; as appears from the fact, that when Jesus was arrested, He was taken to his house instead of to that of his son-in-law Caiaphas. And this seems sufficient to justify his being called high priest.

The duration of the Baptist's ministry is unknown. Some extend it to three years, others add to it another half year; but Greswell maintains that it is inconsistent with John's subordination to Christ, that his ministry should be as long as that of his superior; and argues, that as his only commission was to announce the Messiah, six months would be a sufficient period. He also thinks it incredible that John should have been baptizing three years before he was interrogated by the Sanhedrim. He concludes, that both would enter upon their offices at the same age; and supposing John's ministry succeeded by that of Christ, by allowing six months for that of the former and three complete years for that of the latter, he refers to them the half week of years in Daniel's prophecy.

At Bethabara, where the Israelites under Joshua had passed through the Jordan, John the Baptist commenced his ministry, by inviting all their descendants to be baptized, calling upon them to renounce their sins and amend their lives, as the condition of their admission into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, which was about to be established. The phrase peculiar to Matthew is equivalent to *Kingdom of God* used by the other Evangelists, and signifies the Church, that is, a society into which both Jews and Gentiles were to be *translated out of darkness*, and incorporated as the subjects of God's *dear Son*, who, if faithful to Him on earth, would be finally admitted into glory and blessedness in heaven. The term was taken from Daniel's prophecy, and understood to mean an universal temporal Sovereignty, the seat of which would be Jerusalem instead of Rome. From the same pro-

phcey the Jews had learnt to call its ruler *the Son of Man*, an equivocal title, as it had been applied to Ezekiel, to mark his low condition, as contrasted with angels, and which seems to indicate, that it would be in human nature that the Messiah would reign. It is a humbler appellation than that of *the Son of God*, and was therefore preferred by our Lord Himself, but it is never given to Him by others, nor does He Himself use it after the Resurrection, for it seems to have an especial view to His state of humiliation. In our own version the Greek term Βασιλεία is translated *Kingdom*, and use reconciles us to the expression; but it is contrary to the idiom of our language, sounds harsh to a critical ear, and sometimes leads to misconception. We shall perceive this by substituting for it *Reign*, for it is a reign that comes, and kingdom is the place where it prevails. This is apt to cause some confusion as to its locality, and to make the reader think of some distant unseen portion of the universe, instead of the very planet which he and his fellow-men inhabit. This reign or kingdom is the grand subject of prophecy, and it was too frequently and too explicitly foretold not to be eagerly looked for by the Jews, who in their dispersion throughout the world had taught the Gentiles to entertain the same expectation. The coming of this *Desire of all nations*, this universal Sovereign, was the event to which all others were subordinate and introductory, for which even the world had been created, and the human race had been suffered in the person of the first man to fall from its original perfection. Adam on his creation was placed under the covenant of works, *Do this, and thou shalt live*; but when he brake it by disobedience for himself and his posterity, the Covenant of faith, *Believe, and thou shalt be saved*, was substituted as the remedial system to restore them through repentance and reliance on a Deliverer from the guilt and power of sin, to the favour of their Creator. From that day

the government of our world was placed under the Son of God, Who showed Himself occasionally to a favoured few in the appearance of our nature, which in the fulness of time He was to unite with His Deity, so that He might reign as the Son of Man for the good of His people. It pleased the Father from the beginning that there should be always *a seed to serve Him*, reduced at one time to a single household, but afterwards expanding into a nation, yet still that nation when most numerous bore a small proportion to the human race. Palestine, the seat of light in the midst of surrounding darkness, where God was worshipped according to the ritual He had Himself prescribed, while the rest of mankind were the slaves of cruel and licentious idols, is described as a Vineyard, that portion of an estate which the owner esteems most valuable, and cultivates with peculiar care. This figure was familiar to the Jews, as it had been explained by Isaiah, (v. 7.) that *the Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts was the house of Israel*, and was recognised by them, and used by our Lord in this sense in His Parables. Within this inclosure Jehovah reigned as a King, by a sensible manifestation of His Providence; still the regions beyond were not neglected, and were as really, though not so apparently, under His government. The Bible differs from all other records in laying open the secret causes of events; the revolutions of empires are ascribed by other historians to human power and sagacity, but we learn from the inspired volume, that it is the Most High *Who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and appointeth over it whomsoever He will*, and that *He putteth down one and setteth up another*, in order to prepare and establish the Redeemer's reign. With this guide we perceive, in what appears to others a fortuitous succession of events, an harmonious scheme, and from the glimpses of it which we can discover, believe that the whole is the arrangement of perfect wisdom and benevolence. This consolatory

doctrine, which we may collect from the other books of Scripture, is clearly developed in that of Daniel, who was favoured in a dream with a view of the symbols of four empires which were to succeed each other, till the universal dominion *over all nations and languages, which is never to be destroyed*, and for which all these were preparatory, was to be given to *the Son of Man*.

And not only was this reign prepared and foretold; as the time drew nigh, the Baptist was sent to qualify its subjects for it, and to correct their notions, for they misconceived the character both of the Sovereign who was to establish it, not as a conqueror *by might or by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts*; and of the Sovereignty itself, for He came not at His first advent, as they vainly flattered themselves, to make the Gentiles their subjects, but to subdue the passions, to regulate the will, to bring aspiring imaginations into captivity, and, without interfering with earthly distinctions, *to purify to Himself, out of Jews and Gentiles, a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. They had also mistaken the time, and therefore the Sovereign, to show that at His first coming He did not mean to assume this government, made exactly the same proclamation as His herald; *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. His Ministry, for He came at first *not to be ministered to, but to minister*, was under the Jewish dispensation; His Reign did not commence till the day of Pentecost, when He sent down the gift of the Holy Spirit, which He had purchased by His death, and began to exercise the power which He had obtained on His resurrection, and will retain till the object for which He reigns has been accomplished, when *He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father, that God may be all in all*. His Sovereignty, *beginning at Jerusalem*, gradually prevailed, till it had overturned the ancient Idolatry, and silenced Philosophy, and had taken possession of the Roman

empire. It advanced into the barbarous regions beyond ; but has since receded before Mahometanism in the ancient seats of Learning, and been enslaved in its birthplace, although retaining in the body of the people many adherents. With this exception, and that of India and China, where it has also converts enough to prove that it is able to triumph over their polytheism, as well as over ancient forms of error, it now occupies all the civilized portions of the globe. Our increasing knowledge of its surface has discovered millions of Pagans, to few of whom it has even been proclaimed, and Christianity is not yet the professed religion of the majority of mankind. Still, though its progress is slow, it is advancing, and, according to the sure word of prophecy, must spread from land to land, till *all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ*. His Religion is established in Christendom, and is professed by many beyond its limits ; and He reigns in the hearts of His faithful subjects, directing all things to their real, though not always to their apparent, benefit. Hitherto, however, His Reign has been indirect, administered by Kings and Priests, but it was the belief of the early Christians, that it was not to be always invisible and spiritual, but that in due time the Lord Himself would actually reign with His saints upon the earth. “ The orthodox,” writes Justin Martyr, in the East, in the second century, “ know that there will be a Resurrection of the Flesh, and a thousand years in Jerusalem rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged, according to the joint declarations of Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the other Prophets.” In the West, Tertullian, half a century later, maintains the same opinion. “ In this kingdom upon earth, antecedent to the kingdom in Heaven, God has provided for the reception of the Saints, for refreshing them with abundance of spiritual goods, as a compensation for those which they have disregarded or lost in this world.” The carnal abuse of this

doctrine by subsequent writers, who described it by anticipation as a Mahometan paradise, brought it into discredit. It was again revived at the Reformation, but the gross excesses of the German Anabaptists soon ended in the extinction both of their profligate kingdom, and in the rejection of the doctrine which they had so flagrantly corrupted. King Edward's Catechism expressly teaches, that when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, we desire that Christ may reign with His Saints, and be Lord in the world." But this doctrine did not reappear when Protestantism was restored by Elizabeth, and was forgotten here and on the continent till revived by Mede in his Latin key to the Apocalypse, in the reign of Charles the First. Bishop Newton, in his Dissertations on the Prophecies, rendered it accessible to the general reader, and, with the increasing study of unfulfilled Prophecy, it has been adopted by many who were originally prejudiced against it. They maintain, that on the expiration of the 1260 days, during which the Church is banished into the wilderness, it will not only be purified from every error, and triumph over every foe, but that its Lord and Saviour will literally fulfil the predictions of the Scripture, by reigning as a Man on the throne of David at Jerusalem. Such is the conclusion drawn from a careful comparison of numerous passages, by many divines who have not on other points given way to their imaginations; and no candid reader can, I think, deny, that there is great weight in their arguments, or that it is probable, as the end of this Dispensation draws nearer, believers should be permitted to form clearer views of the future. Still there are also passages unfavourable to this interpretation, and objections of various kinds, which will occur to the thoughtful and spiritual Christian.

The fundamental doctrines of our holy faith are so clearly revealed in Scripture, that he *may run who readeth*; but a

partial veil is thrown over many subjects, so that they can be but indistinctly discerned. Our Lord's Personal Reign appears to me to be one on which His followers may be allowed to differ, for certainly, if true, it cannot be essential, since it has been unknown to so many Saints in so many ages of the Church. There can be no difference of opinion as to the qualities which He requires in His people, and all agree that in due time, the *pure in heart*, the humble, the faithful, and the obedient, will see *the King in His beauty*, but whether, when He comes, it will be to take them to heaven, or to reign with them on earth, is, I conceive, not material for us to ascertain; for in either, happiness can be found only in His presence. If admitted *to see Him as He is, we shall be like Him* in body and in soul, and if we be with Him and be like Him, it is of no importance where.

As Jesus announced to His contemporaries His approaching reign, and as His miracles proved that He could take possession of His Sovereignty whenever He pleased, it is not surprising that both His disciples and the people should be impatiently expecting this event. It became therefore expedient to correct their mistake, and to show them that the Messiah must suffer before He could enter into glory; but this was an unwelcome truth, which neither could as yet bear. He accordingly conveyed it indirectly, and made it the main subject of many parables, by which He contrived with more than human skill at the same time to teach and warn the individuals of all succeeding generations. The Baptist's call upon his countrymen ought also to have taught them, that the kingdom for which information was the qualification must be of a spiritual nature. These who aspired to be subjects of it he prepared by Baptism, a rite by which proselytes were received into the Jewish Church, but which had never before been administered to those who were members of it by birth, and were always introduced into it

by circumcision. The Israelites, however, had been called upon to sanctify themselves by washing their clothes, (Exodus xix. 10.) and, we may presume, their bodies also, before the Law was announced to them by Moses, and this second national Baptism may be considered as preparatory to the Messiah's dispensation. It implied, therefore, that they too were sinners, obnoxious to the Divine wrath, who notwithstanding the privilege they enjoyed of being in covenant with God, required as well as the heathens to be washed in *the fountain* which was about to be *opened for sin and for uncleanness*. (Zech. xiii. 1.) John administered this rite to those who confessed their sins, but he had not authority to forgive them; and they who submitted to it, indicated, by thus *putting away the filth of the flesh*, that they needed and expected a more efficacious baptism which should purify and save the soul. It was natural that his countrymen should ask the Baptist who he was, and why he baptized; and their manner of questioning him shows, that they expected that the Messiah would introduce His religion by this ceremony. He allows that their expectation was correct, but he is careful to mark the distinction between the Baptisms of the two, which, as administered by them both, was to the senses the same. Repentance, and renunciation of sin, was the qualification for both; but his was only *an Ordinance*, a sign of the purity that the Messiah required in His subjects; Christian Baptism is a *Sacrament*, which, when rightly received, conveys it.

Baptism is one of the terms consecrated by use, which our translators were commanded to retain, and its meaning has been keenly disputed. In many passages it means no doubt *Immersion*, yet *Aspersión* would seem to be a better rendering in others, and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is sometimes represented by sprinkling and pouring; *Then I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your defilements*. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) *And it shall come to pass*



*in the last days, saith the Lord, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh.* (Joel ii. 28.) The spot chosen by the Baptist on the banks of the river, and the observation, that he baptized at Ænon, (John iii. 23.) *because there was much water there*, seem to prove that he administered it by immersion; and this mode, which so significantly represents *our death unto sin and our rising to newness of life*, was that of the primitive Christians, who, to use St. Paul's expression, *were buried in Baptism* with their Lord. Still Aspersions were used from the beginning when required by illness or convenience, and we can hardly imagine that the three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost were baptized by Immersion, or the jailor and his family in the prison of Philippi. In our country it has, though not countenanced by the Prayer Book, become universal. But this deviation from the original practice need not cause us any uneasiness, since it is reasonable to believe that Christ, who looks more to the spirit than to the letter, has granted to the ministers of His Church discretion in the circumstantialia of both the Sacraments.

The two chief parties into which the nation was divided, the Sadducees and Pharisees, equally came to John's baptism. The former were called after Sadoc, who had flourished two centuries and a half before, the pupil of Antiochus Sochæus, president of the great council. He is said to have inferred that there was no future state, from a misconception of the doctrine of his master, who, in inculcating duty, rejected the powerful but as he conceived unworthy motives of fear and hope. They adhered exclusively to the letter of the Law; rejecting traditionary interpretation and enlargement of it: they undervalued (if they did not, like the Samaritans, reject) the other books of the Old Testament, and did not believe in the Resurrection, or in the existence of Angels, or a superintending Providence. The latter, who are supposed to have

sprung up soon after, derived their name from *pharass*, to *separate*, because they separated themselves from others, to a life of professed sanctity; but while strict in their performance of the rites and ceremonies of religion, they were lax in the interpretation of its moral precepts, the force of many of which they contrived to explain away. They maintained that Moses, in addition to the Law which he had committed to writing, had received oral instructions in the Mount, which had been carefully transmitted from generation to generation; and these Traditions, which were chiefly of a ceremonial nature, as the washing of hands and cups, and a punctilious payment of tithes of the most trifling articles, they valued above the weightier matters of morality, and too often made to supersede them. The principle also on which they acted was reprehensible, for their motive was the praise that cometh not of God but of men. They therefore made long prayers in public, were ostentatious in almsgiving, showed by their appearance when they fasted, and wore broader phylacteries and larger fringes than others<sup>g</sup>. The religion of many, we know, was only put on as a mask, under which they were enabled to indulge more freely in covetousness, arrogance, and other sinful propensities; for they are reproved by our Lord as hypocrites, and with more severity than their rivals. Some no doubt deceived themselves, and there were others like St. Paul, exceptions, *according to the righteousness of the Law blameless*, who held the principles of *this straitest sect* of Judaism, without being tainted by the abuses it had a tendency to produce. They

<sup>g</sup> The phylacteries were pieces of parchment inscribed with four paragraphs from the Law, Exodus xi. 1—10. xiii. 11—16. Dent. vi. 4—9. xi. 13—21. which the Jews, interpreting literally the injunction to bind the words of the Law as a sign on their hands, and as frontlets between their eyes, wore about their persons. They were also commanded (Numb. xv. 38.) to wear fringes or borders to their cloaks, and those who wished to appear more devout than their neighbours, made both larger, that they might be more conspicuous.

acknowledged the immortality of the soul, which, like the Greek philosophers, they connected with its pre-existence<sup>h</sup>; and with Pythagoras they believed that on leaving the body it transmigrated in succession into other individuals. From the prevalence of this doctrine arose the supposition, that Jesus was the Baptist risen from the dead; and probably the question, *Did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?* While the Pharisees, who were superstitious and uncharitable bigots, rested in complacency in their presumed holiness, trusting that they were righteous, and despising others, the Sadducees were men of the world. The first were the favourites of the people; the latter, who were fewer in number, were generally of rank and fortune, and did not seek public offices. Josephus informs us, that scarcely any of the business of the state was transacted by them; and that when in the magistracy, they were obliged to accommodate themselves to the opinions of the Pharisees, that the populace might tolerate them, and yet after the Resurrection they seem to take the lead. We commonly call both Sects, but that is not so proper a word as Party, for both conformed to the national worship; they therefore resemble in this respect the monastic Orders in the Church of Rome, rather than what in modern language we understand by sectaries. The former believed too little, the latter too much, and were both from different causes equally distant from the kingdom of Heaven. The first were men of pleasure, the latter religious formalists. There is also frequent mention in the Gospels of Scribes and Lawyers, which appear to be synonymous terms for one order, as they are used indifferently, Matt. xxii. 35. Mark xii. 28. The first name they derived from their original occupation of transcribing the Law, the other from the interpretation of it to which that gradually led.

<sup>h</sup> Such is the testimony of Josephus. (A. ii. 18.) “Being good, I came into a body undefiled,” says the author of the Book of Wisdom, viii. 20.

Our Lord seems to acknowledge their right to teach, and their fidelity in the office, while He condemns their practice; and from this and other facts, we conclude that they were the Levites, who are not mentioned under that name in the New Testament, on whom devolved the instruction of the people, and the administration of justice, while the Priests were restricted to the services of the Temple. In their opinions they agreed with the Pharisees. We also read in three places of Herodians, who appear to have Herod's partisans, and who, like him, accommodated themselves in a degree to the idolatrous practices of the Romans. As they were opposed to the Pharisees in recommending submission to existing authorities, and as their leaven, that is their doctrine, (Mark viii. 15.) is called that of the Sadducees, (Matt. xvi. 6.) we infer that the religious opinions of the two were the same.

The Baptist, who was an intrepid reprover of vice, addressed both Pharisees and Sadducees as a *generation of vipers*, by which he seems to designate them, in contradiction to the title of which they boasted, their descent from Abraham, as more properly the children *of the old serpent* the Devil, as Christ afterwards expressly called them. He enquired with astonishment, *Who had warned them to flee from the impending<sup>1</sup> wrath*: neither, therefore, came in the proper frame of mind; the one were as proud of their presumed piety and virtue, as the other were of their superiority to vulgar prejudices; and formalist and sensualist were alike unprepared to welcome a holy, humble, self-denying Messiah. Probably expecting His immediate coming, they thought it necessary to submit to Baptism as an appointed ceremony, without any desire of the internal purification, which it was designed to denote and recommend. As some, however, might have been impressed and affected by his preaching, the Baptist requires not mere [μεταμέλεια] sorrow for sin, but

<sup>1</sup> wrath to come, A. T.

[μετάνοια] change of mind, which *worketh out reformation*<sup>k</sup> *not to be repented of*. He exposes the vanity of their reliance upon their descent from the Father of the Faithful, as entitling them, though so unlike him in character, to an entrance into this kingdom, by declaring that God's purpose would not be frustrated by their rejection, as *out of the stones* before them *He could*, if necessary, *raise up children unto Abraham*. The *axe*, he continues, is *lying at the root of the trees* about to be felled, and by this figurative language he warns them that their reformation must be immediate.

His preaching brought conviction to the consciences of many of his hearers, and led them to seek directions for their conduct. John had renounced the world from his youth, and resided in the wilderness as a hermit. Such a course of mortification and religious contemplation has often been recommended as more excellent than the diligent fulfilment of the duties of active life; but it is not encouraged by the Scriptures, which teach us not to withdraw from the world, but to keep ourselves unspotted by it. The nature of his Mission required and justified it in John, but he did not hold it forth for imitation, but only enforced on those, who were struck by a sense of guilt, the duties of justice and benevolence. To those of benevolence he exhorted the people, *He that hath two coats, let him share with him that hath none; and let him that hath food do likewise*. To those of justice, in which they were the most deficient, the soldiers and publicans, that is, the farmers of the taxes; and he gave to each class specific instructions, suited to its besetting temptations. The soldiers then on service (στρατευόμενοι, not στρατιῶται) he charged to be content with their pay, neither seizing property by force, nor obtaining it fraudulently; and the publicans he required not to exact *more than their due*. It is remarkable that he does not condemn the profession of

<sup>k</sup> repentance, A. T.

either, though that of the latter was held unlawful by many in his time, and that of the former is by many in ours. Isaiah had foretold that a Voice should cry in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a highway for our God*; and this prediction the Baptist applies to himself. No one who heard him, therefore, could doubt that the Messiah would be Jehovah, who had ever been the King of Israel, and the preparation to be made was worthy of such a Sovereign; for as pioneers used to precede an Eastern monarch, to prepare for him, by filling up valleys and lowering heights, a straight and smooth highway; so by casting down the imaginations of the proud, and by raising the humble and contrite, a people would be formed disposed to welcome and obey their Incarnate God.

John is well characterised by the prophet as a Voice, for the sole object of his commission was to proclaim the Messiah. He was faithful in discharging it, for he disclaimed the honours which his hearers were ready to bestow, and directs them to the *Light, to bear witness to which he was sent*. His witness comprehends the Divinity, as well as the Authority, of the Messiah; for he declares, *that He existed before him*, which it was evident could not have been in this world, and that himself was not worthy to *bear or unloose His sandals*, the office of the lowest servant, although Jesus bore witness to him afterwards, that he was inferior to none of the human race. He also strongly marked the inferiority of his Baptism to that of Christ, by contrasting water, which cleans the surface, with fire, which refines and purifies the substance. He adds, *He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost*, thus assigning to His Baptism an efficacy which his own could only prefigure; and he shows by the comparison of Him to the husbandman, who separates the wheat and the chaff by winnowing, that while the penitent are preserved, the incorrigible will be punished. The impending

wrath from which the Baptist warned his hearers to flee was temporal, but like other scriptural warnings it also comprehends the final and unalterable decision of the Day of Judgment.

The opponents of Christianity are pleased to assume as an incontrovertible truth, that Repentance and amendment of life must restore a sinner to the Divine favour; yet reasoning can establish no connection between the two; experience as far as it goes tends to prove, that repentance cannot remove the effects of past transgression, and this conjecture, for it is no more, is contradicted by the natural feelings of mankind, who, under every form of religion savage or civilized, have endeavoured by sacrifices, often even of human victims, to appease an offended Deity, whom conscience represented as an object not of love but of fear. Historians and travellers of all ages prove an universal persuasion, handed down no doubt from tradition, that *without shedding of blood there is no remission*<sup>1</sup>. However we may speculate, God alone can determine what He will accept as a satisfaction for the violation of His laws. If Repentance could expiate our transgressions, surely the doctrine would have been revealed by him who came on purpose to preach Repentance. But though he enjoins it as an indispensable duty, he never represents it as meriting pardon, but points to the Lamb of God as *taking away the sin of the world*. "Those that can imagine the removal of the guilt of the least sin feasible by the choicest and most religious of their own works, never as yet knew God truly, nor themselves, nor their sins; they never understood the fiery strictness of the Law, nor the spirituality of the Gospel. . . . In Christ alone is that *Fountain that is opened for sin and uncleanness*. . . . It is from His crucified side that there must issue both Blood to expiate,

<sup>1</sup> See Bp. Porteus's Lectures on St. Matthew, vol. i. p. 84.

and Water to cleanse our impieties<sup>m</sup>.” Most professors, in all their works of repentance, sorrow, and humiliation, are too, too apt secretly to think that they make God some amends for their sins. But this conception is most dangerous to the soul, and dishonourable to God, as being absolutely and diametrically opposite to the tenor of the Gospel, for it causes us, while we acknowledge a Christ, tacitly to deny a Saviour. And herein is the art and policy of the Devil seen, who will keep back the sinner as long as he can from the duties of repentance and humiliation, and when he can do this no longer, he will endeavour to make him trust and confide in them. But let this persuasion still remain fixed upon our spirits, that repentance was enjoined the sinner as a duty, not as a recompense, and that the most we can do for God, cannot countervail the least we have done against Him. Nothing can cleanse the soul but that Blood that redeemed the soul; and the only repentance that deserves the name, is itself one of the spiritual gifts which Jesus hath been exalted to the right hand of the Father to bestow.

<sup>m</sup> South's Sermon on 1 John iii. 3.



## PART II.

16. *Jesus comes to John for Baptism.* Matt. iii. Mark i.  
Luke iii.

WHEN the national expectation had been sufficiently raised by John, this superior Teacher, Whom he came to announce, suddenly offered Himself for Baptism. Jesus was then beginning to be about thirty years of age; we may then conclude, that, as if born in the spring He would have completed that period at the passover of A.D. 27, April 9, He was baptized early in the same year. Being free from sin, He could not repent, and needed no reformation. Notwithstanding, He thought fit to honour the Baptism of John as a divine institution; and though in Himself of immaculate purity, deriving no taint from Adam, it might become Him, as the representative of his corrupt race, to be baptized as well as circumcised. John, conscious both of the purity of character and preeminent dignity of Jesus, hesitated to perform an office, which seemed to mark superiority; nor did he consent, till admonished that it was an ordinance which it became them both to fulfil. The reason has not been recorded, but it may be considered as a formal consecration of the Messiah to His office, in the same manner as, under the ancient dispensation, the high-priest required ablution, previous to his inauguration. When John afterwards announced Him to his disciples as *the Lamb of God*, he declares that he knew Him not till the Spirit pointed Him out as such, by descending and remaining on Him. Some, taking the expression in the strictest sense, suppose, that, though they were relations, and their mothers friends, it was arranged by Divine Providence that they should have no

personal acquaintance, that the Baptist's testimony might be placed beyond suspicion. Yet, upon this supposition, it is not easy to conceive why he should have hesitated to baptize Him, as the sign was given afterwards, and Jesus must have appeared to him as requiring baptism as much as any other Israelite. The apparent dissonance between the Evangelists Matthew and John may be satisfactorily reconciled, by distinguishing between knowing the person and the office. Thus the Jews knew Jesus as the reputed Nazarene, the son of Joseph, but not as the Christ; Jesus Himself said afterwards, (John xiv. 9.) *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?* and in the same manner the Baptist might know Jesus, and know Him so well as to be convinced that, from His moral excellence, He needed not to be baptized, and *bring forth fruits of repentance*, and yet not be aware that He was born to be King of the Jews. As Jesus went up straightway from the river, He prayed, probably for the influence of the Spirit to render His ministry acceptable and efficacious, when the heavens were opened; which seems to mean, that the glory, or bright light, which usually accompanied a manifestation of the Deity, appeared, and the Holy Spirit descended, as it were a Dove, while a Voice proclaimed, *This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased*. Thus, in the Baptism of our great High Priest, there was an exhibition to the senses of the Three Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity, each acting according to the economy of the scheme of Redemption, the Father appointing the Son to be Mediator, the Son accepting the appointment, and the Holy Spirit anointing Him *with the oil of gladness above His fellows*, and so qualifying Him for the work He had undertaken. It seems to be the general opinion, that a Dove actually appeared, but some refer the resemblance not to the bird itself, but its fluttering motion, and suppose it to have been a lambent flame, such as settled on the Apostles on the day

of Pentecost. The Spirit of the Lord rested henceforth upon His human nature in all His fulness, being not given to Him by measure, as to His apostles, to whom His gifts were divided. This Voice was again repeated at the Transfiguration, and, for the third time, at the close of His ministry, after He had been proclaimed the Christ by the multitude, when for their sakes, to confirm their faith, He prayed in their hearing, *Father, glorify Thy Name*. Thus was our Lord consecrated to His high office, by one who was honoured by the whole nation; and God confirmed the appointment, I apprehend, in the presence of the Baptist alone; for it does not seem likely that such a manifestation should have been vouchsafed to the multitude, especially as Jesus afterwards tells the Jews that they had not heard His Father's voice.

17. *The Temptation.* Matt. iv. Mark i. Luke iii.

An interval of solitary Meditation was a suitable preparation for the duties of His laborious, painful, and difficult course. The Spirit therefore impelled the beloved Son of God to withdraw into the desert; and here, like Moses previous to his receiving the Law, and Elijah when called upon to restore it, He endured a fast of forty days among wild animals, far from the haunts of men. Fasting and Prayer, which in the Bible are so often found united, have been dissevered in modern times, and it was no doubt the abuse of the former that led to its disuse. Its beneficial moral effect, however, when properly regulated, and its suitability to seasons of private or public calamity, cannot be denied; and we may learn from instances in the life of our great Example, and from the fact that the Christians at Antioch, (Acts xiii. 2.) before they sent forth the first Mission, fasted as well as prayed, that the two would be the

best commencement of any important undertaking. During the whole of this period Jesus was tempted by the evil Spirit; but only the three assaults with which he tried Him at its expiration are recorded, either as more violent than his other wicked suggestions, or as more suitable for our instruction, as we here see our Master's triumph over the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*. The conflict had no human witness: it must therefore have been revealed at the proper season, in order to be recorded for the edification of the Church; and though we pretend not to be able to fathom the depths of this mysterious transaction, we can perceive with the light afforded us by the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it *behoved* our Saviour in this, as in other respects, to be *made like unto His brethren*; and that as our progenitors yielded to the first Temptation, and thereby transmitted to their whole posterity their depraved nature, it was fit that our new federal Head should, before He entered upon His office, encounter and triumph over the Tempter. We are hereby taught, that there is no impiety so gross which the Devil will not tempt the best of men to commit; and we have the consolation of knowing, that our Master has had an experimental knowledge of the temptations that try His people, and that He is not only able, having been proved to be without sin, *to succour them that are tempted*, but that, as *He suffered, being tempted*, He can also sympathize *with the feeling of our infirmities*. The suggestions of the Tempter would cause Him distress in proportion to His perfection, and our gratitude is strengthened by this record of what He unseen endured for us, in addition to these sufferings that met the public eye. His great example teaches us, when exposed to the *fiery darts* of the spiritual adversary, to resist him by watchfulness, prayer, and a right use of the word of God.

The perfect human nature of our Lord was incapable of

sinful thoughts; and this is sufficient answer to those, who would explain the Temptation as an allegorical representation of the suggestions that occurred to Him, to abuse His delegated power as the means of personal gratification. Others conceive, that the whole passed in a vision; but as there is no intimation that favours this opinion in any of the three narratives, there is no more reason to deny that this Temptation literally took place as described, than that in the garden of Eden, and indeed it seems fit that both should be considered as similar transactions. The Devil, we believe then, now appeared in a visible and probably a human form; he knew that the fate of man depended upon the conduct of his representative, and that by His failure, the scheme of Redemption would be frustrated. Our Lord's appetite returned, in a place where no food could be procured by ordinary means, and no bodily suffering is probably more severe than extreme hunger. How great then is the trial to One who has it in His power to remove it! The evil Spirit, called in this narrative by the three names that characterise him, the Tempter, the Accuser, and the Enemy, chose therefore this crisis for his most subtle assault. The first Adam had been tempted in a garden, and prevailed upon to eat one forbidden fruit, when he might innocently have satisfied his appetite with all the rest; but the second Adam met the enemy in a barren wilderness where there was none, and thus gave him a great advantage. Satan tempted Him to distrust the Providence of God, and to provide for His support by that miraculous power with which He had been entrusted, not for His own use, but for the promotion of the work which He had undertaken. He insidiously transformed himself, as it were, into an angel of light. The danger of the temptation appears in its plausibility; he did not urge Him to create a feast for indulgence, but to change a stone into a loaf, that He might not perish with hunger, and might

satisfy Himself that He had not been mistaken in supposing Himself *the Son of God*. Consent would have shown distrust of God's Providence and Promise, and a disposition to use improper means of relief. It was his duty to wait patiently; as Jesus told him in the words of the Law. The life of man depends upon the will of God; He can find food for him, or, if He pleases, even support him without it. As in other quotations in the New Testament, the force of the reply is not fully perceived without a reference to the context. The chosen people, with a promise of entering Canaan, were also in a desert, which could not maintain them by its produce, and therefore they were there for years supported by miracle. *He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know, that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* (Deut. viii. 3.) This reply repelled the Temptation, and the Tempter was overcome by the *Sword of the Spirit*. We perceive that the Devil is too crafty to begin by tempting established believers to gross and evident wickedness; and when he finds them still relying, notwithstanding their distress and difficulties, upon God, determined to suffer rather than seek relief by sin, he changes his ground. Thus in the second temptation of our Lord, by a garbled quotation from Scripture, (omitting, *to keep thee in all thy ways*,) since by Scripture he had been defeated, he tempted Him, whom he could not persuade to distrust, to the opposite sin of presumption, saying, *If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.* He took Jesus along with him for the purpose to the roof of the Temple, and urged Him to throw Himself down, and

exhibit Himself to the people suspended in the air, as their long-expected Son of Man *coming in the clouds of heaven*, thus affording them the sign they afterwards demanded so often. That this was his design may be collected from the scene of it being, not, as before, the Wilderness, but the Temple. This would have been an ostentatious and an unwarranted requisition of a Miracle to be wrought for His preservation, from danger wantonly incurred through the desire of display, and of proving the faithfulness of God. Jesus therefore answered the enemy by another quotation from the same book of Deuteronomy, which plainly forbids men to tempt the Lord their God, by unnecessary appeals to His Providential care. The last recorded Temptation is the offer of empire, addressed, it should seem, not to ambition only, but to every passion that can be gratified by the unlimited possession of all the objects of sense, which an absolute sovereign may claim. When we consider how many hopeful Christians have sacrificed their consciences even for a small share of the enjoyments, the power, or the praise of the world, we may appreciate in some degree the irresistible attraction of all to men, unless restrained by Divine influence, and we shall thankfully use the petition recommended by our tempted Master, who perfectly knew our nature, *Lead us not into temptation*. The Devil, defeated in the former instances, seems to have despaired of success by any covert temptation, and to have resolved to make one bold effort, grounding his hope upon the vastness of the recompense which he proposed as the price of a transient act of worship. He therefore conveyed Him to a mountain, from which, like Moses, He might have a view of the whole promised land, for this appears to be the empire Satan offered Him. It was not, indeed, the deceiver's to give, but already by right His own, as well as the sovereignty of the whole world, although to be acquired only through His volun-

tary humiliation. Whatever disguise the Devil had before assumed, his own proposal must now have unmasked him. Jesus therefore addressed him by his name of Satan, or Enemy, and commanded him to depart immediately, for it was written, that God alone should be worshipped. Thus baffled, he left Him, but only for a season; for he again tempted Him, if not in person, through others; and we are taught by our Lord's example, that if we *resist the Devil, he will flee from us*. Angels then came to rejoice in His triumph, and to pay Him a willing homage, far more satisfactory than that which even an universal emperor could have received from slaves, and to supply His wants, an act which shows His pre-eminence above every creature.

The two Evangelists, though they give substantially the same account, and often use the same words, record the temptations in a different order, the latter joining together the two in the wilderness; but with the majority of harmonists, I prefer that of St. Matthew, for it does not seem likely that the Devil should have left Jesus on the roof of the temple; and there is an obvious opposition between the trial there and the first, neither of which would, so manifestly as the last, betray the real character of the tempter. Mr. Greswell suggests an ingenious reason for this transposition of St. Luke, which I transcribe. "The first temptation is addressed to the purely sensual principle, the second to the purely intellectual principle, the third to the two combined: the proximate cause of the first we know was hunger; that of the second, we may reasonably conjecture, the voice from heaven at our Lord's Baptism; and that of the third, the expectation of a temporal Messiah: the object of the two first was to discover whether Jesus was the Son of God; that of the third, whether He was the true Christ. If so, it would appear to be the strongest in the eyes of the Jews, because a temptation to avow Himself such an one as they expected



and desired; but to the Gentiles it would seem to be simply addressed to ambition, and of inferior strength to the second, and therefore one writing for Gentiles, would be likely to place it first." It is remarkable, that He was afterwards twice assailed by the temptation of worldly grandeur; first by His own disciple Peter, whom He rebuked in the same terms as He did Satan on this occasion; and again, when the multitude, persuaded by His feeding five thousand persons with a few loaves and fishes that He was the Prophet whose coming Moses had foretold, intended to take Him by force, to make Him their King.

18. *The Testimony of the Baptist to Jesus.* John i. 19—52.

The fame of John's Baptism had attracted the notice of the Sanhedrim, and they sent a deputation of Priests and Levites of the sect of the Pharisees, to enquire whether he were himself the expected Messiah. This he plainly denied, and answered in the negative to their next enquiries, if he were Elijah, or the Prophet; for it was the received opinion that the Messiah was to be preceded both by the former, who would return from heaven, and by Jeremiah, who would for this purpose be restored to life. This may appear contradictory to our Saviour's subsequent testimony, that the Baptist was Elijah; but if John had assented, he would have misled them, as they understood the prophecy of Malachi literally, and therefore he answered not in the true sense, but in that of the proposers of the question. Being then asked who he was, he answered as before, the Herald of the Messiah; Whom he now declared, though they knew Him not, to be actually in the midst of them. The day after their departure Jesus returned from the desert, and John, seeing Him approaching, pointed Him out to his disciples and the persons assembled as *the Lamb of God*

*that taketh away the sin of the world.* The comprehensiveness of the expression is most remarkable, not sin, or the sin of Israel, but of the whole world. This doctrine was a stumblingblock to the Jew, and even to Christ's Apostles after the Resurrection. It was *this secret, Christ the hope of glory* to the Gentiles, for which Paul suffered imprisonment, and was thought by his countrymen to be unworthy to live; yet here it is plainly asserted by the Baptist; nor need this superior knowledge surprise or perplex us, as it has done some commentators, since we know from St. Luke that He was filled with the Holy Ghost from His birth. The innocence of the Lamb is proverbial, and our Redeemer was *holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.* The Baptist, however, did not refer to the purity of His Life, but to the efficacy of His atoning Death, thus intimating to his hearers, who were well acquainted with their own national ritual, that both the Paschal Lamb, and those that were sacrificed at the morning and evening service, were only typical of this the real Victim, which had been *slain* (in the Divine decree) *from the foundation of the world.* (Rev. xiii. 8.) It was to that daily Offering which was bought with the half shekel, which all Jews paid as the price of their redemption, (Exod. xxx. 12.) that St. Peter alludes, when he says, *Ye were not redeemed with silver and gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.* (1 Pet. i. 19.) St. Paul calls upon believers (1 Cor. v. 7.) to *keep the feast*, because *Christ our Passover is slain for us.* In the Revelation (v. 6.) He is represented in the midst of His Father's throne under the symbol of a *Lamb as it had been slain*, Who had by *His Blood redeemed* many out of all nations unto God; and He Himself sets His seal to this doctrine, by saying, *The Bread which I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* The Saviour *taketh away the sin of the world*, by rendering it consistent with God's Justice and

Holiness to pardon and accept sinners; and Repentance and Reformation, to which the deist ascribes inherent efficacy, are themselves gifts purchased by His death.

The next day, seeing Jesus walking, John repeated his testimony to two of His disciples, Andrew and another, who is supposed to be St. John, from the accuracy with which he marks particulars, and his omission of the name. They returned with Jesus to His abode in the neighbourhood on His invitation, and it being the tenth hour, four in the afternoon, stayed with Him the day. Andrew, convinced by His conversation that He was the Messiah, brought his brother Simon, who at this first interview was surnamed Cephas, in Greek, *Peter*, in English, a *Stone*; but they were not called to a constant attendance upon Jesus till some time after His return to Galilee. The day after, Jesus Himself invited Philip their townsman; and he introduced to Him Nathaniel, supposed to be the proper name of the person called by the other Evangelists, Bartholomew, that is, the son of Tholomæus. He was prejudiced against Jesus on account of His reputed birth-place, but candidly yielded to his friend's request, that he should come and judge for himself. To him our Saviour bore this honourable testimony, that he was without guile, in character as well as by descent an Israelite. To convince Nathaniel that He was the Messiah, by showing that His knowledge surpassed that of a mere man, He tells him that He saw him, when he thought himself unobserved, under a fig-tree, probably while conversing with Philip; and this proof that He knew how he was employed when at a distance, removed his doubts, and he acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God, and the King of Israel. Our Saviour seems to wonder that so small an indication of divine knowledge should have drawn forth this confession, and He promises him greater helps for the confirmation and increase of his faith. He assured him, that

as he had been brought to believe, by this single discovery of His glory, His power of knowing what had passed at a distance, he should henceforth be favoured with a sight of greater things, and should behold, as typified by the Ladder shown to their progenitor Israel in his mysterious dream, an intercourse between heaven and earth, carried on by *Angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*, as the medium of communication. His language is obscure, and is generally explained of the personal appearance of Angels; but as none such are recorded by the Evangelists as taking place in the presence of any of the Apostles, we must refer it, I suppose, to our Lord's future exhibitions of miraculous power.

19. *Jesus first shows forth His Glory, by miraculously changing Water into Wine, at a wedding feast at Cana. John ii. 1—12.*

Our Lord returned into Galilee with these five disciples, and, on the third day after, was present at a marriage feast. It is supposed, from the part taken by His virgin Mother, that it was at the house of a relation, and, as Joseph is not mentioned now or afterwards, that he was dead. Jesus here first *manifested forth His Glory*, by changing water into wine; a remarkable expression, which is never used of any prophet or apostle. They were only instruments by which God manifested forth His glory; but Jesus, as Emmanuel, wrought His mighty works by His own inherent power. As He taught, so He performed miracles with authority. *I will, be thou clean*; (Matt. viii. 3.) *I charge thee come out of the man*: (Mark ix. 2.) whereas the language of Peter is, *Why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? His Name, through faith in His Name, hath made this man strong.* (Acts iii.)

*Jesus Christ maketh thee whole ; (ix. 34.)* and under the former dispensation, Moses thus addresses the Israelites, *Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you.* (Exodus xiv. 13.)

Our Lord's reply to His mother, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* and the occasion on which this Miracle was wrought, condemn the superstition and the idolatry of the Church of Rome, which represents celibacy as meritorious, and formally declares the Virgin to be an object of religious worship. Their divines endeavour to refute the charge of idolatry, by a subtle distinction, which has seldom prevailed in practice, between supreme adoration, and that inferior degree of it by which the saints are invoked as intercessors to pray to God for us. The former they call *Latreia*, *Λατρεία*, Worship; the latter *Doulia*, *Δουλία*, Service; both of which Greek words, it is remarkable, are appropriated to the Deity in the Commandment, according to the Septuagint, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.* They, however, avow that higher honour is to be paid to the Virgin than to any other created being, and to express it have invented the term *Hyperdoulia*, *ὑπερδουλία*, or Supreme Service. The respect naturally felt for her soon degenerated into a blameable excess. The office of her Son was gradually transferred to her, and she was invoked as the Refuge of sinners, as the Queen of Saints, and even of Angels; and this not only by ordinary individuals, for whose prayers it would not be fair to make the Church responsible, but even by those whom she has canonized. Thus throughout the Psalms, Saint Bonaventura has substituted Lady for Lord, transferring to her the petitions addressed to Jehovah; and a Litany has been composed in her honour, in which she is addressed as the equal of her Son. There are also Hymns in the Roman offices, some of which are still retained, which ascribe to her power over Him, as a mother; and in

the canon of the Mass, there is now a prayer *to* her by name, with the Saints, Martyrs, and Apostles; but the date of this as of other Roman errors may be nearly ascertained, as their earlier Liturgies prove that they then prayed *for* them and *her*. Even at this day there are multitudes who call upon her to beseech, nay even to command<sup>a</sup>, her Son, now that He sits upon His Throne, and has all power in heaven and in earth committed to Him, though in His state of humiliation He would not allow her to counsel Him in the exercise of His ministry. And so far are their divines of our days from softening down such expressions, that Dr. Wiseman, in his Lectures lately preached and published in this country, boldly brings forward from the Fathers some, which he says are stronger than Roman Catholics would use now. We may add, that they are now unhappily returning to their examples in many instances, placing themselves under her immediate direction, without any mention either of the Father or the Son. He selects some from Athanasius, upon which he observes, Mark well these words, "Grant us great gifts from the treasures of thy graces," as if he hoped to receive them from her direct; and prayers from Ephrem Syrus not only to procure salvation for him through her intercession, but from herself deliverance from sin. We allow that they and other Fathers too often address the Virgin in terms which reason and religion alike disclaim; but happily these authors are regarded by Protestants as no more than witnesses to the opinions and practices of their own age. As such they are most valuable; but the more we study their writings, though they contain much to instruct

<sup>a</sup> Witness these passages from Roman Catholic hymns :

" Jussu matris impera Salvatori."

" Monstra te esse matrem."

The latter I have myself seen inscribed over an altar in the cathedral of Narbonne. These commands are softened down to intercession in the English translations, prepared for the Roman Catholics of our own country.

and edify us, the more reason we shall find to rejoice that we have been taught to call no fallible man our teacher, and that our Church refers us to the Scripture as the sole rule of faith. To Dr. Wiseman, who regards the Fathers as authorities, I would recommend a due consideration of a passage which he himself quotes from the Reply of Epiphanius to the Collyridians, who were in the habit of offering cakes, as an unbloody sacrifice, to the Virgin. "Holy indeed is Mary's person, but not divine, not given to us as an object of worship; but she herself worshipped Him who was born of her flesh, and descended from heaven from the Father's bosom. Why did our Lord call her Woman, but that no one might think her of a more excellent nature, prophetically referring to those schisms and heresies which He knew would come? That ancient error shall not rule over us, to desert the living God, and worship His creatures; for if He does not suffer us to worship angels, much less will He the daughter of Anna." (H. iii. 59.) Our Saviour's reply is evidently intended as a discouragement to her interposing, and conveys a reproof, but in the gentlest manner, for there is no coarseness or disrespect in the use of the word Woman. Ladies of the highest rank are thus addressed, not only in Homer's Poems, and in the Greek Drama, but also in that refined age in which Christ was born, as appears from its application to Livia by Augustus, in a discourse preserved or composed by Dion Cassius; and Christ Himself employs it, when dying He consigned His mother to the care of His beloved disciple. The reply is ambiguous; for, *My hour is not yet come*, may mean, that He reserved for the Passover at Jerusalem the performing of Miracles openly as the Messiah; and that this, which was not made known even to many who were benefited by it, was only meant as an act of kindness, and for the confirmation of the faith of His immediate followers. It may also mean, that He would grant her request at the

proper moment, that is, when all the wine was exhausted. So His Mother understood it, and I should presume, with Chrysostom, rightly; for she had not as yet, as he writes, "that opinion of Him which she ought, but because she bare Him, counted that, after the manner of other mothers, she might in all things command Him whom it was more fitting for her to reverence as her Lord."

Infidels object, that this Miracle has a tendency to encourage, at least to tolerate, intemperance; and we must allow, that the quantity of water turned into wine was considerable, being upon the smallest computation above twenty gallons in each of the six vessels. But we should consider, that in that country wedding feasts lasted generally seven days; that the guests, who were probably many, might, in consequence of the invitation of Jesus, who was already sufficiently known to have disciples, be more than had been expected; and that it was not unsuitable to His amiable and friendly character, to provide the new-married persons with some for future consumption. We too in this northern climate are apt to forget, that wine, which is with us a luxury, was in Palestine, as in France or Italy, the ordinary drink, and was much weaker than that which is brought to our tables. The Miracle, it must be allowed, stands alone, as forming a class by itself; all the other Miracles resolve into the removal of positive evil; this into an useful, yet not essential gratification, and yet, unlike false Miracles, within reasonable limits. This beginning of Miracles contrasts the spirit of the two Dispensations; the Hebrew Legislator, who was commissioned to work upon the fears of a tyrant, commenced his mission by converting Water into Blood: Jesus, whose object was to persuade and to renew the heart, changed it into Wine; a change well adapted to show the kindness of His disposition, and to win the affections, which produced the desired effect upon His disciples.



Those disciples had been followers of the Baptist, and one object might be to show them that His doctrine was less rigid and austere. His social disposition, which conveys to us the important lesson, that virtue does not consist in withdrawing from the world, but in overcoming its temptations, exposed Him among His captious adversaries to the charge of excess in eating and drinking; but we may be assured, that He who warned His associates, *Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness*, (Luke xxi. 34.) would countenance no degree of intemperance by His presence, or work a miracle to provide more wine for those who had already drank too much. Excess cannot be fairly inferred from the observation of the Manager of the entertainment, who speaks of feasts in general, not of this particular one. Preachers, however, in contrasting the Saviour's permitting the innocent pleasures of life, with the ascetical austerity of some Christian teachers, have sometimes expressed themselves unguardedly, and have led their hearers, whose passions have seconded their arguments, into too great a conformity with the world. Reasonable indulgence may imperceptibly pass into excess. Let us remember the treachery of our own hearts, and the danger of approaching the very limit of propriety. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God*, is the exhortation of the Apostle; (1 Cor. x.) and the recollection that the articles that compose our entertainments are provided by His Bounty, and the Christian practice of asking His Blessing on our meals, have a tendency to sanctify their use, and to check intemperance. None has been so much abused as the subject of this Miracle; and the false Prophet, knowing that abstinence is easier than temperance, altogether prohibited a beverage, which may for a season degrade man in stupidity below the brutes that perish, or by its maddening quality prove itself, as it is called by the Mahometan poets,

“the mother of sins.” Our true Prophet, by this miracle, not only teaches us that Wine, *which maketh glad the heart of man*, may be innocently drunk, though it is to too many the occasion of guilt; but by making it a symbol of the spiritual refreshment which believers in Him derive from His Blood, He has consecrated it, and thereby afforded an additional motive not to abuse a gift which He hath sanctified pre-eminently, and honoured.

As the conversion of Water into Wine was the earliest of the many mighty works by which Jesus proved that He came forth from God, I avail myself of it to introduce some general remarks upon

### *Miracles.*

A Wonder is natural; our ignorance only makes it wonderful; but a Miracle is supernatural, an effect beyond, and sometimes contrary to, the established order of things. The Creation of God is full of the former, His Word alone acquaints us with the latter. For example, persons apparently dead are sometimes restored from their state of suspended animation; and these resuscitations, however extraordinary, being known to be effected by human skill, are regarded only as *Wonders*; but no one who had seen a man, that had been four days dead, come alive out of the grave at the command of another, could doubt of his having witnessed a *Miracle*. Such events, however, have not occurred within our own experience, or that of our acquaintance; we read of them only in history, and the proper effect of a Miracle is limited to spectators; to others at a distance, whether of time or space, it resolves itself into a question of testimony. Now Testimony is fallible; some men, we know, wish to deceive us, others are themselves deceived; ancient

historians record Miracles which our judgment satisfies us are incredible; and pretensions to them have been made in the Roman Church, and of late, among a few enthusiastic Protestants, which will not bear investigation. Infidels therefore may plausibly urge suspicions against those recorded in the Bible; and this has been the grand attempt of those of modern times, who have seen that Miracles afford one of the strongest external arguments for Christianity, since one really wrought in its behalf, would be considered as an incontrovertible proof that it came from God. I say, infidels of modern times; for those who were present at our Lord's Miracles could not resist the evidence of their senses; yet loving darkness rather than light, they ascribed them, though works of mercy, to a confederacy with the evil Spirit. He argued against the absurdity of this supposition, subversive of the Devil's power; and it is remarkable that His argument is drawn not from the degree of power shown, but from the moral tendency of His work, probably because the former would have made no impression; and in the Pentateuch the Israelites are warned in like manner to judge of Miracles by the doctrine they support, not of the doctrine by Miracles. Still, on other occasions, He declares, and less prejudiced spectators agreed, that His works could only be accomplished by a Divine power; and we may affirm unanswerably, that though invisible spiritual beings inferior to the Supreme may be capable of performing acts beyond our power, the goodness of the Deity is a security to us, that He would never suffer one of them to work a Miracle that should lead the well-disposed into an erroneous belief. This power was disclaimed by Mahomet, who has alone presumed to oppose Christianity by the assertion of a new Revelation; and the only known attempt, that of the Egyptian magicians, if they were really the agents of the evil Spirit, was signally unsuccessful, and the *signs and lying wonders* of Antichrist

will deceive only those *who have received not the love of the truth.*

As in other instances, so in this, the attacks of the enemy have been overruled to good, since they have drawn forth Replies and Vindications, the effect of which has been to confirm the reader in the belief of Scriptural Miracles, and consequently to strengthen his faith. Thus Leslie, in his "Short and Easy Method with the Deist," and Bp. Douglas, in his "Criterion," lay down rules, by which they reject Pagan and Popish Miracles, and establish the reality of those of the Bible. We may observe with Bishop Conybeare, that the more numerous the deceits of this kind are which are brought to light, the greater advantage arises to the Christian cause; for if the Church of Rome, which had all the advantages imaginable on her side towards propagating an imposture, hath yet been unable to deceive us in this respect, how much more incapable must Christ and His Apostles have been, of carrying on such a cheat without discovery. It hath been objected, if Miracles were formerly required, why are they not now granted? We reply, that if there be no just ground to question the truth of those alleged to have been performed to authenticate a religion when first announced, why should men insist on any new ones, since these, confirmed by sufficient testimony, lose none of their credibility by time, nay, are strengthened by the belief of ages. And if Miracles should become common, it is hard to determine how they should be distinguished from mere natural effects; for we judge of what is natural or supernatural, by observation and experience.

A Miracle is defined by Bishop Conybeare to be a sensible effect, either in itself or its circumstances supernatural, that is, above the natural powers of any visible agent, or evidently not produced by it, and contrary to the general laws of God's acting upon Matter. This Definition will comprehend two

classes of Miracles, of both of which the Evangelists supply many examples. The first, the Absolute, are such as no natural causes will produce, as this conversion of water into wine; Christ's walking upon the sea; the satisfying thousands with a few loaves, the remaining fragments of which far exceeded the original quantity; the casting out demons, and the raising the dead. The second, the Providential, are only miraculous in their circumstances, being coincidences divinely brought about between facts, and the words of the performer. An immense haul of fishes, or a piece of money found in the mouth of one of them, are not absolute Miracles, but the natural is raised into the miraculous by its prediction, and the ends it is made to serve<sup>b</sup>. Thus gradually to heal the sick with medicine is sometimes granted to the physician in the ordinary course of God's Providence; but to heal instantly, with a word, and sometimes even at a distance, without the application of any means, or of such means as are evidently inadequate to the effect, is no less miraculous than the first class, though it does not, like that, interfere with the Laws of Nature. A Miracle is contrary to these laws; not that there is any inherent power in Nature, as our language seems to imply; for these Laws, as they are called, are only what God has been pleased to impress upon His Works, and He can suspend them at pleasure. With Him any change is possible, and to the Almighty whatever is possible, is equally easy. To prove then a Miracle possible, we have only to show that the moral perfection of the Deity does not forbid its performance; and every reasonable person will grant, that the confirmation of a divine Revelation is the fittest occasion that can be conceived for such a display of power. If a knowledge of God's will be desirable for the guidance of our

<sup>b</sup> Trench's Notes on the Miracles, p. 13, and 130. from which learned and instructive work I have inserted many striking remarks, both in this general view, and in the reflections upon most of the miracles separately considered.

conduct here, and for our happiness hereafter, we may justly expect the communication of it from our heavenly Father; but how shall a Teacher sent from God convince us that he speaks with authority, unless he produces the credentials of his mission? and what other credentials can he appeal to except Miracles? “In fact, The very idea of a Revelation includes that of Miracles. A Revelation cannot be made but by a miraculous interposition of Deity, so that the probability of a Revelation implies a correspondent probability of the occurrence of Miracles; nay, we may even venture to affirm, that there is a necessary correlation between the two; for as on the one hand Miracles (or prophecies, which are in fact miraculous, being contrary to the course of nature) are necessary to prove the divine authority of an agent; so, on the other hand, the performance of Miracles, or the delivery of true predictions, immediately suggest the conviction that they have been permitted, for the purpose of proving, that the person by whom they are performed, is employed by God to do something, or reveal something, which mankind would not have known in any other way<sup>c</sup>.” The Greek word, *σημείον*, Sign, is therefore a more appropriate one than Miracle or Wonder. *What sign showest Thou, seeing Thou doest these things?* (John ii. 18.) was the demand made by the Jews to Jesus, when He assumed the Messiah’s office of purifying the temple. We know (iii. 2.) Nicodemus’s conclusion, *Thou art a Teacher come from God, for no man can do these Miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him.* Our Lord Himself uses the same argument on several occasions; *The works that I do, they bear witness of Me.* (v. 36. x. 25.) And the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 4.) tells us respecting the Apostles, that *God bare them witness, with signs, and wonders, and with divers Miracles, and gifts of*

<sup>c</sup> Olinthus Gregory’s excellent *Letters on the Evidences, Doctrines, and Duties of the Christian Religion*, vii.

*the Holy Ghost*; including under these various terms every act of a supernatural character.

The Miracles which we justly discredit, as those of Apollonius of Tyana among the Heathen, and those of the Jesuit Apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, and of the founder of the order himself, are mentioned for the first time by biographers unacquainted with them, who wrote at a considerable interval after their deaths. These of the two latter are even disclaimed by the first writers of their lives, while they are too numerous, and many of them too silly, to be believed; whereas those of Jesus, which are all worthy of Him and well-timed, were from the first maintained by His adherents, and allowed by His opponents. We have a remarkable instance in the case of the man born blind, of the vain endeavour of the latter to discover some collusion; and the last that our Lord wrought, the restoration to life of Lazarus, which they could not deny, determined them to procure His death. But what neither the contemporaries of Jesus, nor subsequent opponents of Christianity, as Celsus and the Emperor Julian, ventured to attempt, has been undertaken by modern infidels; they have studiously brought forward the Miracles ascribed to Roman Catholic saints by their biographers, and those which are reported by Tacitus of the Emperor Vespasian, and argue, that no better evidence can be assigned for those in the Scriptures. Their objections have been ably refuted by Bishop Douglas, and by Leslie in his celebrated tract, to which I refer, only extracting from them their marks of true and false Miracles. The latter, says the Bishop, labour under one or other of the following defects, which we think warrant our disbelieving them: the accounts of them were not published till long after the time when they were said to be performed; and the report of them was propagated only at a distance from the supposed scene of action; and allowing them to have the two foregoing

qualifications, we may still suspect them to be false, if in the time when and the place where they took their rise, they might be suffered to pass without examination. Leslie has proposed as criteria of real Miracles, 1. That the fact be such as men's outward senses can judge of; 2. that it be notorious, performed publicly in the presence of witnesses; 3. that there be memorials of it kept up in commemoration of it; and, 4. that such memorials commence with the fact. There are some, in favour of which the two latter marks cannot be affirmed; but whatever has all the four, cannot be false. These criteria he applies with equal force to the history of Moses and of Christ. The Miracles of the latter, as well as those of the former, were wrought publicly in the face of the world; and we learn from the Acts, (ii. and iv.) that after our Lord's ascension, three thousand at one time, and more than two thousand at another, were converted upon conviction of what themselves had seen and known, and in particulars, respecting which it was impossible to impose on them. Here then *in their Nature and their Publicity* we find the first two criteria, and *in the Sacraments* we have the others; for they were instituted as perpetual memorials by our Lord Himself, at the very time when the circumstances to which they relate took place, and they have been observed without interruption, through the whole Christian world, in all ages, from that time to the present. Moreover, Christ Himself ordained Apostles, to preach and to administer the Sacraments, who have continued by regular succession to the present day; so that the Christian Ministry is, and always has been, as notorious in point of fact, as the tribe of Levi among the Jews. The Gospel is also as much a rule of conduct to Christians, as the Books of Moses to Jews; and it being part of the matters of fact related in the Gospel, that Pastors and Teachers were appointed by Christ, to continue until the end of the world, consequently if the



Gospel history and doctrines were invented, in some age after Christ, then at the time of the invention, there could be no such order of men, a circumstance which must give the lie to the Gospel. The miraculous actions of Christ and His Apostles being affirmed to be true, no otherwise than as there were at that identical time (whenever the Deist will suppose the Gospel history to be forged) not only Sacraments, but an order of Clergy to administer them; and it being impossible that there could be any such things before they were invented, it is as impossible they should be received and accredited when invented. Hence it follows, that it was as impossible to have imposed these miraculous relations upon mankind, in after ages, as it would have been to make persons believe they saw the Miracles, at the time they are said to have been wrought, if they had not taken place. It is said, that Dr. Conyers Middleton in vain looked out assiduously for twenty years together, to find some pretended fact, to which these four criteria could be applied.

True Miracles are distinguished from false by the economy both of their Nature and their Number. As they were never wrought except when required, the Miracle required, and no greater one, is performed. They are not assigned to favourite characters, as Abraham or David, but usher in the Mosaic Dispensation, and the efforts of Elijah and Elisha to restore it when almost superseded by idolatry in the kingdom of Israel. They were also wrought by our Lord and His Apostles to establish Christianity; but we may infer from their rarity, that it is only in cases of primary importance, that the Deity suspends the ordinary Laws of Nature. Such reported wonders as show a mere idle display of power, may therefore be at once rejected as incredible. Thus to contrast, as is done in the Clementine Homilies, our Saviour's cures of the dumb and blind with Simon Magus's barking dogs of stone, his

flights through the air, and his transformations into a goat or serpent, is sufficient to mark the first as true, the second as false. The inutility of heathen miracles (and the same may be said of those of the apocryphal Gospels, and of ecclesiastical history) has been strongly urged by Origen. The Miracles of Moses ended in the Jewish Polity, those of Christ in the formation of the Church; but what, he asks Celsus, have your boasted Esculapius and Apollonius to show as the fruit of theirs? If absurd Miracles are to be rejected, much more those that are malicious, such as some ascribed in the spurious Gospels to the benevolent Author of our Religion. Supernatural power, however used, seems to have been the idol of these writers, whose own moral state must have been deplorable, when they could so ill appreciate the character of Him, who only went about doing good, and came to save men's lives, not to destroy them. In Christian countries there can be no adequate reason for any, since the Bible carries with it sufficient evidence to any sceptical person who will fairly read it; and the tendency of those ascribed to the saints is prejudicial, and contrary to the genius of Christianity, since they exalt the supposed receivers of the gift, not the Giver, and unduly raise them in the estimation of those who believe the legend, which moreover is seldom represented as worthy of Divine interference. *As signs to unbelievers*, and they alone require them, the power of working Miracles was granted to the Apostles *to cooperate with them*; but when no longer wanted, it ceased. A modern Missionary might perhaps expect its revival, were not the expectation checked by the recollection, that the gift had not been bestowed on his predecessors since the Apostolical age. The important conversion of our own country and of Germany, falls within an historical period, but neither Augustine nor Boniface, some of whose letters are printed, profess to have worked Miracles;

and Xavier since the Reformation confesses, that he had no such assistance in his labours in India. The absence of these extraordinary gifts is in a degree compensated by the superior intelligence, learning, and knowledge of our Missionaries, especially in medicine and the arts of life; and the moral miracle of cruel or licentious idolaters, who on embracing Christianity have renounced their evil habits, proves that the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to turn the heart to God, and to bring them to the practice as well as to the acknowledgment of their duty. Christianity at its promulgation had more formidable obstacles to overcome, not only idolatry and philosophy, but a real Revelation, the supporters of which could not understand that it was to be superseded by it. All the power, prejudice, learning, and knowledge of the world were then leagued against it. Time has shown its intrinsic excellence and its success, and a Missionary can now appeal to his own ancestors converted without a Miracle. Even in the age in which they were given, their chief use was to arrest attention, and to procure a respectful hearing for the Preacher; and it was by St. Paul's discourses, not his works, that Lydia and Damaris and Dionysius became believers.

The failure of earlier infidels probably led Hume, in his celebrated Essay, instead of making specific objections, to maintain that no Miracle, however attested, can ever be rendered credible even in the lowest degree. "A Miracle," says he, "is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a Miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as complete as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined; and if so, it is an undeniable consequence, that it cannot be surmounted by any proof whatever, derived from human testimony." Dr. Campbell, in his Dissertation, has examined the principles advanced in that sceptical work, and

shows, that the whole is built upon a false hypothesis. He observes, that the evidence arising from human testimony is not, as Hume represents it, solely derived from experience ; but that, on the contrary, Testimony has a natural influence on belief, antecedent to Experience. Besides, the uniformity of experience in favour of any fact, is not a proof against its being reversed in a particular instance. The evidence arising from the single testimony of a man of known veracity, will go farther to establish a belief of its being actually reversed ; and if his testimony be confirmed by a few others of the same character, we cannot withhold our assent to it. Now though the operations of Nature are governed by uniform laws, and though we have not the testimony of our senses in favour of any violation of them, still, if in particular instances we have the testimony of thousands of our fellow creatures, and these too men of strict integrity, swayed by no motives of ambition or interest, and governed by the principles of common sense, that they were actually witnesses of these violations, the constitution of our nature obliges us to believe them. And, in the case of Christian miracles, we may add, that these witnesses were themselves convinced by them, contrary to their original prepossessions ; and that many of them proved their honesty, by submitting, in consequence, to contempt, privations, and persecution, and some even to death. The determination to propagate the belief of false Miracles, (independent of the additional difficulty arising from the silent concurrence of Jews and Gentiles in the delusion which this hypothesis requires,) in support of such a religion as that taught in the New Testament, is as great a Miracle as human imagination can conceive. “ The proof arising from Experience amounts to no more than this, that we learn from it what is conformable to the ordinary course of things ; but we cannot learn from it, that it is impossible that things should happen in any particular instance, contrary to that course. And if it be

possible, there is place for 'Testimony. When also Hume talks of uniform experience, he supposes the very thing in question, because, by his own acknowledgment, mankind in all ages have believed that Miracles have been wrought<sup>e</sup>." The Miracles of the new dispensation are in three respects contrasted with those of the old. 1. Elijah must pray long, and his servant go up seven times, before tokens of the rain appear. (1 Kings xviii. 42—44.) He stretches himself thrice on a child, and cries unto the Lord, and painfully recovers its life. (1 Kings xvii. 21.) And Elisha, with yet more of effort, and only after partial failure, (2 Kings iv. 33—35.) restores that of the Shunamite: while the Miracles of Christ are accomplished with perfect ease; He has only to speak, and it is done. 2. Where the Miracles are similar in kind, His are on a grander scale; Elisha (2 Kings iv. 42.) feeds an hundred men with twenty loaves, He, five thousand with five. 3. Above all, they are distinguished by their moral character. Many of those of the elder dispensation were acts of severity; as all the plagues of Egypt; thus Elijah brought down fire from heaven to consume his enemies, and Elisha caused bears to devour the young men that mocked him; but, as Bacon beautifully observes, the Spirit of Jesus was the Spirit of the Dove, and all His Miracles were works of beneficence, none of judgment. They are distinguished also from all others in having been foretold. He Himself refers the Baptist's disciples to them, as the fulfilment of Isaiah's Prophecy; and two of these, the restoring sight to the blind, and the recovery of the lame, had never been performed before. They far exceed in number those both of the Prophets and of His Apostles. Near Forty are specified; but we learn from St. John, that Jesus performed many not mentioned in His Gospel; and a careful

<sup>e</sup> Leland's Deistical Writers, vol. ii. p. 64.

reader of the first three will perceive, that those they contain are only recorded as a specimen. Thus St. Matthew tells us, (iv. 24.) that *the fame of Jesus went out into all Syria; and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed of devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and He healed them.* And again, (xv. 30.) *great multitudes came unto Him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them.* Similar passages occur in the Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke; and St. John (ii. 23.) adds, immediately after His purifying the temple, *many believed, seeing His miracles*; though the only one he had yet related, was that performed at Cana, at a distance from Jerusalem. Again, Chorazin is mentioned by Himself as the scene of works, which would have converted Tyre and Sidon; yet none of the Evangelists even speak of His visiting that town. They were often wrought in public, and in the presence of enemies, and wherever He went. The whole country therefore was full of those who could bear testimony that He had come from God, from the signs which He had shown; so that we perceive that they must have been far more numerous than we are apt to imagine. It is natural to ask, why, among the multitude out of which they had to select, the different Evangelists have generally given us the same? and the answer is, they probably recorded those that were most memorable, on account of their greater celebrity, or from their more important results. Variety is another characteristic of His Miracles. Not merely one disease, but all, yield to His power; not only diseases, but bodily defects: *He made the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see*; (Matt. xv. 31.) and there are commentators of note who think, that He not only restored the

use of limbs, but even the limbs themselves<sup>f</sup>; yet I can hardly believe that this opinion is tenable. Surely, if this had really been the meaning, it would have been brought out more distinctly, and no Miracle appears to have been a creation, for there was matter to work upon in the one that comes nearest to it, the Multiplication of the loaves. In three instances He recalled to life the dead: and finally, He set the seal to His Mission, by raising His own Body from the grave. Inanimate objects, the wind and the waves, obeyed Him, they even changed their nature, water becoming wine, and a few loaves growing into many. Evil spirits also submitted to His command, and left those they had possessed at His bidding. Some persons He cured on their own petition, others on that of their friends. No distinction was made between rich and poor; the only exception is, that His Miracles were never worked to gratify unbelievers, or to benefit Himself.

In subservience to their grand design, (Isaiah xxx. 5.) the confirmation of His Mission, they had, as observed, a secondary object, the alleviation of misery; and we may safely affirm, that thousands were restored by Him to health and the use of their limbs. If the condemnation of the fig-tree, and the destruction of the herd of swine, be urged as exceptions; I answer, that the condemnation of a barren plant that belonged to no one was neither an interference with private property, nor an injury to the community, and conveyed to His own age, and, as recorded, to all subsequent ones, a warning which, properly improved, will save many souls from destruction. The other He did not command, but permit, and it is no greater impeachment of His goodness, than the existence of moral evil is of the justice of Divine Providence. We should also set the recovery of the De-

<sup>f</sup> This is the sense given by Elsner and Wetstein to *καλλῶ*, which our translators render *maimed*, and is distinguished from *χαλῶ*, *the lame*, with which it is joined. Matt. xv. 31.

moniacs against the loss of the Swineherds, who ought probably not to have kept them within the Holy Land; and it produced, though not immediately, a beneficial effect upon the inhabitants of the district in which it was wrought, far outweighing the injury it had occasioned. It proves also beyond the power of confutation, the reality of demoniacal possession, and as such it still answers its end, as the fact is denied not by infidels only, but even by some Christian writers.

To three<sup>g</sup> (John ix. 1—7. Mark vii. 33. viii. 23.) it is objected, that Christ made use of an external application; but as the application had no efficacy, but what He was pleased to give it, this cannot lessen the miracle. The reason of this departure from His ordinary mode seems to have been, because He required faith in the subjects of them. Thus we are told, that *He did not many mighty works at Nazareth, because of their unbelief*; and of many whom He cured, He first made an enquiry as to their faith in His power. For this purpose, He used such an application as was best calculated to make an impression on the senses the men possessed unimpaired, antecedent to the Miracle, and such as led them to observe, that He was about to interpose in order to perfect the organs which were defective. A deaf man can judge of the intentions of another only by seeing what he does. Such an one, therefore, our Lord took aside from the multitude, that He might fix his attention on Himself; He put His fingers into his ears, and touched his tongue, to signify to him that He intended to produce a change in these organs; and then looked up to heaven, at the same time speaking, to show that this change would proceed from a Divine power exercised at His interposition. The same purpose was answered by the application of clay to the eyes of the man born blind. It assured him, that the Person who anointed them was the sole Author of the cure; and had the ground of His assurance

<sup>g</sup> Graves's Essay on the Character of the<sup>h</sup>Apostles and Evangelists.



been less full and circumstantial, He could never have silenced so unanswerably the captious objections of the Pharisees. We may be confirmed in believing this to have been the design of these external applications, by observing, that they were used in no instance except those of blindness and deafness; and still more, by observing, that it does not appear that any of these three men had any previous knowledge of our Saviour. It was therefore necessary to draw their attention to Himself. When the blind men at Capernaum, (Matt. ix.) and those near Jericho, (Matt. xx.) applied to be healed, it was with a declared belief in His power. Here, therefore, no external application was required; as they professed their belief, He only required that this profession should be sincere. *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* They said unto Him, *Yea, Lord.* Then touched He their eyes, saying, *According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened.* (Matt. ix.)

In conclusion, I observe, that He alone communicated this power to His disciples, but with this material difference, that He possessed it at all times, and acted by His own authority. They could only act when permitted, and when they acted, they referred the Miracle to their Master, as the real Author. From this we justly infer, that not only, like Moses and Elijah, Jesus was sent from God, but that He was God.

## PART III.

20. *Jesus commences His Ministry, by driving traders out of the Temple. John ii. 13.*

[A.D. 28.] FROM Cana, Jesus, with His five disciples, His mother, and brethren, went down to Capernaum, which seems, whenever He was stationary, to have been His home; but He now stayed there but a few days, as He was desirous of commencing His Ministry in the Holy City in which it had pleased God for many centuries to set His Name, and during the Feast which preeminently shadowed forth His expiatory Sacrifice of Himself, when it would be filled with worshippers not only from Judæa, but from all the countries in which the Jews were dispersed. This was probably the year 28 of the Vulgar æra, and 780 of Rome, literally *the acceptable year of the Lord*, being the thirty-third Jubilee, reckoning from the first sabbatical year after the second division of the conquered lands by Joshua. Jesus had changed water into wine at the marriage feast, to confirm the faith of His disciples, and perhaps of His mother, but His hour of publicly displaying His miraculous power was not then come. Even the governor of the feast knew not whence this wine of superior quality came, but as the servants did, the fact must have transpired. Still the report of it might not have reached Jerusalem, and it was there and at the Passover that He gave to His nation this sign of His being the Messiah. The miracles He wrought there were probably numerous, but they are mentioned only generally. We are told, however, that they produced the effect intended by them, that *many believed in His Name*, but most of them entertained carnal and worldly hopes, and had no conception of the spiritual

nature of His sovereignty; for it is added, *He did not commit Himself unto them.* The cause assigned, *He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man,* is equivalent to a declaration of His Divinity, for Reason as well as Revelation teaches, that, as David said to Solomon, *Jehovah searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.* (1 Chron. xxviii. 9.) And this Prerogative, peculiar to God, is claimed by Jesus, who describes Himself to this Evangelist at Patmos as *He who searcheth the hearts and the reins;* (Rev. ii. 23.) and He appears to be the Lord possessing this attribute, to whom the Apostles submitted the selection of a successor to Judas. (Acts i. 24.) He now took possession of His house, the Temple, and commenced His Ministry by purifying it from the traders, who sold the animals used in sacrifice, and those who, for the convenience of worshippers, exchanged money within its precincts. He nearly closed it with the same act, (Matt. xxi. 12.) which must not be confounded with this, which is recorded by St. John alone. On that occasion, when, being about to be offered up, reserve was no longer expedient, He referred to Isaiah's prophecy, (lvi. 7.) *It is written, My house shall be called an house of Prayer for all nations.* He now called it *His Father's house*, in a sense higher than that in which it could be used by those who were only God's children by adoption, and which was suitable to no one but the Messiah; and that He was so understood, is plain from their demanding by what right He thus acted. Jesus did not spring from Levi, but *was of another tribe*, Judah, of which *no man gave attendance at the altar;* (Heb. vii. 13.) it must therefore have been as the Proprietor of the Temple, as the God of Israel, to whose service it was dedicated, that He drove from it those who had polluted it. The Jews then first required of Him a sign from heaven to justify this assumption of Authority, as they did repeatedly afterwards during the

course of His Ministry ; but He refers them enigmatically to a sign from earth, His Crucifixion, and Resurrection on the third day, which He obscurely shadowed forth by declaring, that if they destroyed this Temple, He would raise it again. This they misunderstood of the Temple *made with hands*, but He spake, we know, of His own body, in which *dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, (Col. ii. 9.) that is, *really*, not typically, and which was therefore better entitled to the appellation than that material fabric, which was before them. They regarded His speech as both blasphemous and absurd. Nothing, not even the sign from heaven, could better establish His right than the fact of His Resurrection ; that event, however, being yet future, and expected by none of His audience, He could not have been understood at the time ; but to those *who had ears to hear*, He supplied in this declaration a theme for meditation. The obscurity, however, of His reply does not supply them with any excuse, for He proceeded to do such works as no other man had done, which abundantly demonstrated that He had come from God. He was not understood by His disciples any more than by His enemies, till His meaning was explained by the event ; but they then applied to Him the words in which David, as a type of the Messiah, says, *The zeal of Thy house has eaten me up* ; (Psalm lxxix. 9.) understanding by it, the ardent desire which now led Him to purify the Temple from the abuses that disgraced it. Yet this zeal, however ardent, was tempered with discretion ; the sheep and bulls He drove before Him, but He only ordered the dove-sellers to remove their cages, as He did not wish to injure them by the loss of their property. His enemies treasured up the saying, and brought it as an accusation against Him on His trial ; but their malice was defeated, as they contradicted themselves in reporting it ; one saying, *I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days* ; (Matt. xxvi. 61.) the other,

*I will destroy this Temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.* Make not, He now said, *My Father's house a house of merchandize.* The second time His reproof was stronger, *Ye have made it a den of thieves;* and this seems to imply, that they were not only covetous, but dishonest. It was the court of the Gentiles that was so desecrated, and it would be difficult for the proselytes, who were not allowed to come nearer to the Altar, to make it a house of Prayer, amid the talking of the traders, and the noise of the cattle. By this act the Lord of the Temple restored the whole sacred inclosure to its original use, and marked, as on other occasions, that the time was at hand, when God should be worshipped *in spirit and in truth.* These mercenary traders must have been numerous, especially at the passover, when a multitude of worshippers were assembled, who were to be provided with lambs for the paschal supper, and sheep and bulls for the following day. Nevertheless a man in humble life, hitherto little known, of no influence, without attendants, or arms, except a scourge made at the moment out of the ropes with which the cattle were confined, drove them all before Him. Pride, covetousness, and resentment, would incline them to resist, but conscience made them timid, and His manner must have overawed them.

21. *Nicodemus converses with Jesus by night.* John iii. 1—21.

Nicodemus is almost the only Israelite of distinction and learning that, in the lifetime of Christ upon earth, became a Christian. A Ruler and a Pharisee, himself a Teacher, and probably an admired one, he felt ashamed of seeking instruction from one whom his countrymen did not acknowledge. Still, superior to the prejudices of his class, he was satisfied that Jesus could not do the works He did, *except*

*God were with Him*, and therefore *He came*, but it was secretly and *by night*. He was timid yet sincere in the search of truth, and His gradual progress in knowledge and resolution is most encouraging to all who are tempted by the fear of ridicule or suffering to conceal their convictions, since they may learn from His example, that if they will only set out on the path of duty, God will grant them strength as they advance, till at length they will publicly maintain the truth which at first they dared not acknowledge. The next we hear of Nicodemus is his venturing to speak in favour of Jesus in the Council, though he had scarcely any to support Him; and after His Crucifixion, when all His followers were dispersed, he with another councillor came forward openly to honour this reputed malefactor, by bringing a large and costly mixture of spices for His embalment. The disposition of Nicodemus at this first interview seems to have been right; yet though a Teacher in Israel, he was ignorant even of the elementary truth known to babes in Christ, that no profession of religion will be of any use without purity of heart, and that this, which no man possesses by nature, must be received as a gift from God. He held the common notion of the Jews which John's Baptism was intended to refute, that they would enter of course into the kingdom of the Messiah in their present state, without Repentance or Reformation. To this opinion, probably not expressed, yet known to Him who can read the heart, Jesus replied, by declaring the necessity of a change of nature, and that the only admission into this kingdom was by Baptism. This initiatory Sacrament has in our age, as the other Sacrament in former ones, excited a controversy within the Church. Baptismal Regeneration is mainly deduced from this portion of Scripture, and therefore this seems the proper place to introduce some observations upon the nature and effects of Baptism, as declared by the Church of

England. Nicodemus begins the conversation by acknowledging, that the Miracles of Jesus had convinced him that He was a divinely-commissioned Teacher; and our Lord observes in reply, that *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*. He introduces this declaration, as He was accustomed to do those of special importance, with *Verily, verily, I say unto you*; and certainly there is none which it more concerns us to heed than the conditions of our admission into the Christian Church. Our Lord here positively asserts the necessity of a change, not only of state, but of character, so complete and entire, as to justify its being called a new or heavenly Birth; and in conformity with this declaration, the Apostle writes to the Corinthians, (2 Cor. v. 17.) *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*. The dulness of Nicodemus in not comprehending Jesus amazes us; and our Lord's reply shows, that he who undertook to teach others, ought to have been acquainted with this primary truth. Much unquestionably, even under the Jewish Dispensation, had been spoken by the Prophets concerning the renewing and purifying influence of the Holy Spirit; and the initiatory rite of Circumcision, and the various lustrations enjoined in the Law, typified and bore witness to the necessity of inward purification and of the mortification of sin. Jehovah had inspired Jeremiah (xxxix. 33.) to promise that He would write upon the heart of His people the New Covenant which He would make with them; and by Ezekiel (xxxvi. 25, 26.) He had said, *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, and I will put a new spirit within you*. His own reason too might have convinced Nicodemus, that this doctrine was founded on the Nature both of God and of man. As a creature, man is under an obligation to obey the law of his Creator, and that law must be, like its Author, perfect. As such, it must approve itself to right reason; but many of its

commands men have at all times regarded as too strict, and even those which they can not deny to be just and good, they have not the will to perform. A change, therefore, must be wrought either in the Law, or in Man; but as the immutability of the Divine perfection precludes the possibility of mitigating the Law to suit man's depraved inclinations, these inclinations must be turned to what is right, and Man must be *born again of incorruptible seed*, and so far become *partaker of the Divine Nature*. That which we derive through our parents from the stock of the fallen Adam, is, like that stock, corrupt; and all, except as renewed in the Spirit, dread the Creator as a hard Master, instead of loving Him as a benevolent Parent. In all the descendants of Adam, therefore, this change is required, whatever be their circumstances or natural disposition, and no exception is made in favour of those, who, whether by birth or adoption, as the seed of Abraham or as proselytes, were the children of promise. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*. The fallen nature of the First Adam is here contrasted with the new nature of the Second; and the remark is introduced to show, that even a second natural birth, the case put by Nicodemus, could be of no avail, since from corrupt parents, a child could derive only corruption. This change Jesus illustrated by a comparison drawn from the natural world. The wind is invisible, yet its existence is demonstrated by its effects; so the Christian, though the manner of his becoming one eludes observation, manifests by his conduct, that he has been delivered from the dominion of sin, and *translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son*.

So far, Regeneration, though a hard saying to Nicodemus, presents no difficulties to us; but in explaining it, our Lord inserts another word, and says, that a *man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, unless he be born of water as well as of the Spirit*. On comparing this solemn asseveration with His



charge to the disciples to baptize, accompanied with the promise, *Whoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved*; and with St. Paul's declaration, (Titus iii. 5.) that *we are saved by the washing* [or laver] *of Regeneration*; we are naturally led to interpret the new Birth of Baptism, by which the Catechism teaches, that we who were "by nature the *children of wrath*, are made *children of grace*, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." Accordingly, Baptismal Regeneration has always been maintained by the Catholic Apostolic Church, as is evinced by the unanimous consent of ancient Liturgies and Commentators, and the doctrine is explicitly asserted in the Services, Homilies, and Articles of our own reformed Branch of it. This doctrine, I am well aware, has proved a stumbling-block to many pious modern believers; and some even reject it, because, as they imagine, at variance with the genius of Christianity, by substituting the form of Godliness for its power; encouraging the professor to rest satisfied with a dead faith, and lulling into a fatal repose the conscience that might be awakened to a sense of sin, and the necessity of conversion. A work like this is not suited to the discussion of a controverted tenet, especially of one so important which more perhaps than any other excludes from our Communion conscientious Dissenters, and is not received by all who adhere to it. These, who have doubts concerning it, ought to study the writings of Barrow, Waterland, the present Bishop of Bangor, and others who have expressly treated it; but I cannot pass over this Discourse without avowing my conviction, that our Church, which introduces it into the Office for the Baptism of Adults, maintains that Regeneration is effected in that Sacrament, and briefly assigning the reasons that satisfy my own mind. Its opponents take water in a figurative sense, and appeal to the Baptist's declaration, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*; but the last element must be named

metaphorically, the water may be mentioned in its primary meaning, and I conceive that the use of it in Baptism shows that it ought to be so understood. It is highly improbable, to say the least, that our Reformers with all antiquity should have erred in their interpretation of this passage, and that it should have been reserved for Calvin to discover its real meaning. They were inferior to none in spirituality of mind, and had no superstitious confidence in forms and ceremonies, or undue deference to authority, to induce them to retain a tenet that was really subversive of piety and morality. We should indeed doubt their interpretation, if the pernicious consequences charged upon Baptismal Regeneration really flowed from it; but I am persuaded that this is a false assumption arising from misconception, and that the controversy would never have existed if the two parties did not use the same word in different senses. *Regeneration*, which the foreign divines, and our own till a recent period, restricted to Baptism, began to be used for *Renovation*; and those who held that Grace was indefectible, naturally denied that it was always conveyed in that Sacrament; while those could have no objection to this statement who believed that the baptized might fall from it, and recover it. The doctrine has also been overstated by its opponents, who complain that it condemns all who have not been baptized to perdition. Common sense, however, assures us, that it is not the involuntary omission, but the contempt of any command, that will be fatal; and our Church only maintains, that the Sacraments are *generally* necessary to salvation, meaning thereby, *when they may be had*. With respect to adults, Antiquity considered that Martyrdom supplied its place, nor did it condemn the unbaptized who were prevented from coming to that Sacrament. And with respect to infants, as the punishment of original sin is remitted in Baptism to them, so we may fairly

conclude, (though in this charitable and I may add just opinion, we are opposed to Augustine and other Fathers,) that those who are not brought to the font will not suffer for an omission, for which no blame can fall upon them. Our twenty-seventh Article affirms, that it is a sign of Regeneration, or new Birth, whereby they that *receive* Baptism *rightly*, are grafted into the Church; and if we ask what is a *right* reception, the Catechism will inform us, that the conditions are Faith and Repentance, and these being present, how is it absurd or unreasonable to suppose that Regeneration ensues? Is this more than is warranted by St. Peter's language? (1 Pet. iii. 21.) *Baptism saves us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.* The Adult heathen, therefore, who offers himself for Baptism in a right frame of mind, is, I conceive, in the very act *translated out of darkness* into the kingdom of *God's dear Son*. That such a transition should be definitively marked is desirable, and Baptism which, as a fact, can be ascertained, seems preferable to a presumed subsequent conversion, which can hardly be made known to others, and may be doubted by the subject of it himself. The unwillingness of many to adopt this conclusion, I ascribe to the tendency in a Christian country to consider Baptism chiefly with a reference to Infants, whereas to understand it as laid down in the New Testament, we ought to view it in relation to persons of age to understand the obligations it imposes. Thus taken, Baptismal Regeneration appears to me a reasonable and edifying doctrine which ought to be predicated of Adults, if there be any doubt of others; but when I consider that Infants were admitted into the Abrahamic covenant by Circumcision, when it was impossible that they should comprehend its demands on them, and that we have reason to think that the children of believing parents were received into the Church from the time of the Apostles without an exception,

it appears to me that the practice of baptizing them has been rightly retained by our Reformers. To prevent the abuse of the doctrine, they have taken care to teach, that the conditions of Faith and Repentance which are then promised for them, "when they come to age themselves are bound to perform." The privilege may be forfeited; but even then I should maintain, as Baptism is not merely "a Badge of Christian men's profession," but as a Sacrament, "a pledge," "an effectual sign of Grace," as well as "the means whereby we receive the same," that infants as well as adults may be said to be regenerated in that Sacrament.

Those who, adhering to the original and unvarying language of the Church, maintain Baptismal Regeneration, mean not to deny that the best Christians require continual renewal, or that those must be converted who, by a course of sin, have weakened or extinguished the Grace bestowed in Baptism. The Ninth Article of our Church teaches, that "although there is no condemnation for them who believe and *are baptized*, (according to the Latin original *regenerate*,) yet even in them doth the infection of nature remain;" and *as the flesh still lusteth against the Spirit*, they may, according to the Sixteenth, after baptism "depart from grace given, and fall into sin." We pray therefore for the person about to be regenerated, that "all things belonging to the Spirit may *live* and *grow* in him." And these words suggest the real meaning of spiritual life, which, like the natural, may be impaired or lost. The privileges of Baptism will be forfeited by those who cease to walk in newness of life, but they will be restored to the penitent. Sinners, therefore, are exhorted in the Epistles to be converted, and to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, but never to be born again; for Baptism, as the stipulated condition on God's part of granting salvation, is never to be repeated. This is the prescribed mode of our new Birth, which, like our natural one, can take

place but once; and the Eucharist is the prescribed mode of Renovation; the soul which is born anew in the one Sacrament, being strengthened and refreshed in the other. The original mode of administering Baptism, by immersing the body beneath the water, aptly represents our "death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness."

If when our Lord spoke of the necessity of our eating His body and drinking His blood, He alluded to the Sacrament in commemoration of His Death, which He designed to institute; it is reasonable to assume, that in this conversation, He referred by anticipation to the only other Sacrament which He ordained. Baptism had already been used as the rite by which proselytes had been admitted into covenant with God, under the Jewish Dispensation. John had baptized even the Jews themselves, though they had received the sign of Circumcision; and Jesus now declares that the entrance into His kingdom is by the same rite, but that, under His Dispensation, as foretold by John, it would not only be symbolical of mental purity, but be productive of it. A change both of character and of state was required, and the latter must be manifested to the world by some ceremony. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* And Nicodemus, who shrunk from the avowal of his faith, was taught, that it is not enough to believe Jesus to be the Christ, but that His followers must publicly acknowledge Him. The adult believer, then, who declines to be baptized, cannot be regenerated; for though he calls Christ, Lord, he does not obey His positive command; while he who comes in faith to that Sacrament, is *translated out of the kingdom of Satan*, and is at the same time *born again of the Spirit* by water, as an instrument, and obtains the remission of his sins, and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit.

The distinction between Regeneration and Renovation is

thus stated by Waterland<sup>a</sup>. “Man does not regenerate himself, whatever hand he may otherwise have (but still under grace) in preparing or qualifying himself for it. God makes the grant, and it is entirely His act; man receives only and is acted upon, though sometimes active in qualifying himself, as in the case of adults, and sometimes entirely passive, as in the case of infants. The thing granted and received is a Change from the state natural into the state spiritual; and Translation from the curse of Adam into the grace of Christ. This change carries in it many privileges, but all reducible to two; Remission of sins, and a covenant Claim, for the time being, to eternal happiness. These blessings may all be forfeited or finally lost, if a person revolts from God, either for a time, or for ever; and then such person is no longer in a regenerate state, with respect to any saving effects; but still God’s original grant stands in full force to take place as often as any revolter shall return, and if he desires to be as before, he will not want to be regenerated again, but renewed or reformed. The grant once made continues always the same; but the reception may vary, because it depends upon the condition of the recipient. Renovation is rather a capacity or qualification (in adults) for Regeneration than the Regeneration itself; it may and it should be in them, before, in, and after baptism. Preventing Grace must go before, to work faith and repentance: afterwards in baptism, the Holy Spirit fixes, as it were, His dwelling, renewing the heart in greater measure; and, if His motions are more and more complied with, the Renewing grows through the whole course of the spiritual life.”

This doctrine Jesus calls earthly, because the nature of the new Birth may be illustrated from earthly objects, and

<sup>a</sup> Regeneration stated and explained.

may be understood from its effects; and He proceeds to observe, that He has heavenly truths to disclose, which, not falling under the cognizance of experience, are more hard to receive. Such are, His own Incarnation, and His giving Himself as a propitiatory Sacrifice; for He goes on to intimate, that the Messiah would not be, as the Jews expected, the Avenger of their wrongs, and the Restorer of their national liberty, but, by *His Crucifixion, the Author of spiritual, eternal Deliverance*, not to them only, but to the world; and He describes Himself as at once the *Son of Man*, and the *Son of God*. This doctrine, which Nicodemus could not then bear, Jesus expressed by a Type, which would be understood after the event, and He purposely chooses one from the Old Testament, to show that this doctrine, as well as that of Regeneration, though not perceived by the Scribes, was contained in the ancient Scriptures. They might, however, have perceived its hidden meaning, if they had not been blinded by national pride; for the Book of Wisdom says of the Brazen Serpent, (xvi. 6.) *He that turned himself towards it was not saved by the thing he saw, but by Thee who art the Saviour of all*: and it is a Jewish tradition, that as their ancestors in the wilderness who had been bit were cured by looking at the image, so the bite by which the old Serpent had injured Adam and all his posterity would be cured in the time of the Messiah. To all who expect deliverance from everlasting torments from no endeavours of their own, but from the unmerited mercy of the Deity, the image which Moses was ordered to erect is a most significant type of the Saviour; and it is satisfactory to know from His own authority, that it is not the conjecture of a fanciful commentator, but the true interpretation of Divine Wisdom. The sufferer who had recourse to medicine instead, died, whereas he who in reliance on the promise, only looked at the image, was healed. Thus whoever by a simple act of

faith believeth on the Son of Man lifted up on the Cross for his salvation, will obtain eternal life; for Jesus plainly declares, that the object of God in sending His Son into the world was to save it. He adds, that it would not receive His testimony, and as that was supported by sufficient evidence, it was justly condemned; for the *light had come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil*. He that shuts his eyes and remains in voluntary darkness, is inexcusable.

22. *John again bears Testimony to the Superiority of Jesus.*

*John* iii. 22—36. *Mark* i. vi.

Jesus now left Jerusalem, but continued in Judæa, and His disciples, like the Baptist, baptized with water unto repentance; but Jesus Himself baptized not, because the Baptism of the Spirit unto Regeneration, which was to admit members into His kingdom, was not to be instituted till that kingdom was established by His Resurrection. The spot chosen was probably Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where the nation had entered their own land, and from which John had removed, we presume, that he might not interfere with his Master, to Ænon near Salim, remarkable, as the name implies, for its springs, and consequently well suited to his purpose. A dispute arose here between John's disciples and a Jew<sup>b</sup>, concerning Purification. The question seems to have been, why Jesus, who had Himself been baptized by John, should virtually declare the inefficacy of this baptism, by delegating the same office to His own followers. John's disciples, not comprehending the preparatory character of their master's ministry, were unable to give a satisfactory

<sup>b</sup> This reading, adopted by Chrysostom, is preferred by Griesbach to the received text, the Jews.



answer; and by proposing to him the question, gave him, before its close, an opportunity of bearing his final testimony to the preeminence of the Bridegroom of the Church, of whom he announced himself to be no more than the Paranymp, that is, the friend and attendant, who, according to the custom of his age and country, presented the husband to his bride, and continued with them during the days allotted to the wedding festival. The Song of Solomon, in its literal sense an Epithalamium on his marriage with an Egyptian Princess, has always been spiritualized by Jewish commentators; and the correctness of their interpretation, however contrary it is to our notions, is confirmed by the mystic poetry of the Arabs and Persians, in which the same idea is continually presented to us. Marriage is also brought forward, though more sparingly, in the Psalms and in the Prophets, to illustrate the intimate connection that subsists between Jehovah and his people. According to the Psalmist, (xl. 10.) the Church is a *Queen in a vesture of gold*; and Isaiah tells her, (liv. 5.) that *her Maker is her Husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name*. The same figure occurs in the New Testament, in which St. Paul writes that he is *jealous with godly jealousy* over the Corinthians, (2 Cor. xi. 2.) *that he may present them as a chaste virgin unto Christ*; and he affirms Marriage to be a type of the union of Christ with His Church: (Eph. v.) while St. John in the Apocalypse (xxi. 2.) describes the New Jerusalem as *a Bride prepared for her Husband*. Now since from the beginning, the *Israel of God*, under the various dispensations, has been ever one and the same body, under the same Head, we cannot doubt that this title of Bridegroom, when applied to Jesus, identifies Him with Jehovah. Our Lord Himself afterwards assumes it; and it was probably with a reference to this connection that, in describing the state in which He should find His followers at His second advent, He chooses

the comparison of virgins waiting for a bridegroom's coming, in preference to others equally apposite. The Baptist declared, that this Marriage, which had for his sake excited envy in them, on the contrary completed his joy. He reminded them, that he had never claimed any higher dignity than that of the Herald of the Messiah, and he foretold the increase of Jesus, and his own decrease. He confessed, that he, a mere man, could announce only earthly things, but that Jesus who came from heaven testified to the truth of what He had seen and heard, that is, to heavenly things, yet that, generally speaking, no man received His testimony. Yet those who did receive it, thereby acknowledged the veracity of God, in performing His promise through the Prophets of Redemption, by sending His Son, to whom He gave—not as unto them, that is, in greater or smaller quantity and at certain seasons, but—without measure the Holy Spirit. Whosoever *believed in Him* should have eternal life; as the Father who loved Him had conferred upon Him all power; but on those who *disobeyed Him*, the original curse laid upon Adam, which through Him alone could be removed, would abide. Our translators have not preserved the distinction in the original between *he who believeth*, and *he who disobeyeth*; a variation, as Doddridge observes, not to be overlooked, since the latter word explains the former, and shows that the Faith to which the promise of eternal life is annexed, is an effectual principle of sincere and unreserved obedience. This explains our Lord's preceding declaration, that He was not *sent to condemn the world*, for the world was condemned already, but that through Him *it might be saved*. All who come to Him for salvation, He will deliver; and those who refuse to hear Him, were before in a state of perdition. His coming, therefore, while it saves all who believe and obey Him, causes the ruin of none; only the wrath of God, under which all were before, still remains on those who will not come

unto Him for life; as the diseased, who reject the medicine that would cure them, die in consequence of their own obstinate want of faith in their physician, who has not caused their malady, but might remove it if they would suffer him. A due consideration of this statement, which might be enforced by similar passages both from the Old and the New Testament, would silence some of the most specious objections of the infidel.

John had now fulfilled his ministry, by directing once more the nation to Jesus as the Messiah, and by showing that eternal life was suspended upon faith in Him. He soon after removed from the desert to the palace of Herod, who did many things gladly which he recommended; but his favour was of short duration; for, reproving the Tetrarch with his adulterous connection with his brother's wife, he was at her instigation thrown into prison. The real cause of his imprisonment we learn from the Evangelists; Josephus (*Ant.* xviii. 5.) states the ostensible one. Having described the Baptist as a good man, who persuaded the Jews to be religious and just, and to come to his Baptism; he says, that Herod, fearing his influence with the people, for they seemed ready to do any thing he should advise, first imprisoned, and then put him to death. This speedy termination of his Ministry seems designed by Providence, that the people might not be perplexed in their choice between these two teachers; and the imprisonment of the Baptist may be regarded as the epoch from which our Lord commenced His.

23. *Jesus, on His way to Galilee, passes two days at Sychar, in Samaria. John iv. 3—42.*

The next discourse of our Lord that has been preserved was with a person as much despised as Nicodemus was re-

spected; a woman in low life, of bad character, and moreover a Samaritan. On John's being cast into prison, Jesus deemed it prudent to retire into Galilee, and His way would be through Samaria. He could not have avoided, without a considerable circuit; but probably, though His own mission was only to the Jews, and He would not suffer the seventy disciples to preach to the Samaritans any more than to the Heathen, He might seek an opportunity of once addressing to them words of life, and of gathering the first-fruits of that harvest, which was reaped not many years after His ascension. Jesus drew nigh to the town of Sychar, but knowing the unfriendly reception He was likely to meet, instead of entering it, sent forward His disciples to purchase provisions; and, wearied by His journey, sat down as He was by the well, called after the patriarch Jacob, from which He could derive no refreshment, as it was deep, and He had nothing to draw with. A woman, however, soon came for that purpose; and her coming gave him an opportunity, according to His custom, of extracting spiritual improvement out of the scene or occupation before Him. He begins the conversation by asking for a draught of water; and she expresses astonishment that there should be a Jew so free from the feeling common to His people of aversion for hers, as to make even this request, which was indeed expressly forbidden by the Pharisees. Without opposing her prejudices, which would not have convinced but irritated her, He contrasts, under the veil of metaphor, the temporary effect that water produces upon the body, with the lasting benefit the Holy Spirit would confer upon the soul. He replies, that though she was disposed to refuse Him, as a Jew, so small a favour, yet He was ready to grant her, though a Samaritan, if she had asked Him, a more precious gift, even living water, which would quench her thirst, not like this well for a season, but for ever. And this she would have done if she had known the

bounty of God, and who He was. As living water in their language, like running in ours, is opposed to dead or stagnant, she understood Him literally; but He spoke in a figure, common in the Prophets, of the refreshing influence of the Holy Spirit, that best gift of God, which if sought will be bestowed, and if bestowed will rectify the judgment and purify the heart. She, not conceiving the drift of His speech, *answered, The well is deep, and Thou hast nothing to draw with*, whence then, if not from this well which sufficed to Jacob and his family, hast Thou this water? To lead her to understand that He alluded to the wants not of the body but of the soul, he rejoins, that this water could answer only a temporary purpose, but that whoso drinketh of the water that He should give, would not only never need any more himself, but would satisfy the thirst of others. How far she understood Him is uncertain; but to prepare her for the reception of this primary truth, by convincing her of sin, the Divine Teacher desires her to call her husband. She had had as many as five, and probably had been divorced from all except the last, for she was not married to the man with whom she was then living. His brief recapitulation of her history, which might be unknown even to her neighbours, satisfied her that He was a Prophet. She confessed her persuasion, and, perhaps, to divert the conversation from the humiliating topic of her own sins, pointed to the adjacent mountain, and enquired, whether her countrymen, or the Jews, were right in the controversy respecting the spot upon which they ought to sacrifice. He decides in favour of the Jews; because from them was to proceed the Saviour; but He adds, that the time had actually arrived, which should supersede disputes of this description, when no place or people would be preferred, but God Himself, *a Spirit*, should be worshipped every where by all with equal

acceptance in *Spirit*<sup>c</sup> and in *Truth*, that is, as we know, though she could not have understood Him, not only with the lips, but with the heart and life; not under the faint adumbration of a ceremonial law of sacrifices, but with a clear knowledge of Him as through Christ a reconciled Father. She makes no objection to this new view of religion, but seems disposed to leave the settlement of the question to the Messiah; whereupon He says, *I that speak unto thee am He*; for He had not the same reason for secrecy here as among the Jews, who, according to the disposition in which they heard Him, were ready to accuse Him as a traitor to the Romans, or to rebel in His favour.

Struck with awe, and agitated with joy, she leaves her bucket, forgetful of the purpose with which she came, and hastens into the city, to invite the inhabitants to come and see this extraordinary Person, whom, because He had told her the events of her life, she was disposed to regard as the Messiah. Their notions of the Deity were erroneous, for they worshipped *they knew not what*; and the Psalms and the Prophets, which reveal the Messiah more clearly than the earlier books of the Bible, were not received by them; yet they seem to have had a more just conception of His real character than the Jews; and Jesus, who would not commit Himself to His own countrymen, announced Himself to them at once without reserve, and they believed in Him without His

<sup>c</sup> It is painful to reflect, that this important Aphorism should ever be forgotten by His followers; yet such is the tendency of man to substitute the forms for the spirit of religion, that the ceremonies of Paganism were soon transferred from the Temple to the Church. Christians again returned to the beggarly elements of the Law, and brought back the Altar and Sacrifice; and instead of praying with the understanding, even now in the East as well as in the West, among Greek and Oriental as well as Roman Catholic Christians, with the exception of Protestant communities, the public service is celebrated in dead languages, as Greek, Syriac, Coptic, and Latin, in which scarcely any of the congregation can join.

working any miracle. To many who soon came to hear Him the report of their countrywoman was sufficient evidence ; and others believed on hearing His discourses themselves ; and this is the more surprising, since He had declared that *salvation was of their opponents the Jews*. The disciples on their return pressed Him to partake of their provisions ; but He was so absorbed in the prospect of usefulness opening to Him, that He thought no more of His hunger and thirst, observing, that He had food to eat which they knew not of. As they did not comprehend His meaning, He explains that the doing the will of Him who sent Him was His food, that is, what strengthened and refreshed Him. As therefore an opportunity of being employed in His work now presented itself, He would postpone to another season the refreshment of His body ; and He encouraged them to imitate His example by the observation, that the Harvest was near, and their toil would be lightened by that of their predecessors, speaking as it were thus—You say, that between seed time and harvest is an interval of four months ; but see the approaching multitude of the Samaritans ; my spiritual harvest then is as a field already ripening for the sickle. This was the good work in which He meant to employ them, as well as to labour Himself ; and, in this case, the Proverb, *One soweth, and another reapeth*, which was generally used in a bad sense, would be happily verified, (Judges viii. 2, 3. Isaiah lxxv. 21. Mark vi. 10.) for they would succeed to the ancient Prophets, and to the Baptist, and reap what they had sown, in which harvest the Sowers as well as the Reapers would rejoice.

He passed no more than two days at Sychar, and this at the earnest request of the inhabitants. Thus by His own example He taught, that the distinction between Jew and Samaritan was to cease ; and Samaria was the first country invited to embrace the Gospel, when persecution had driven

the early converts from Jerusalem. John, who was then sent with Peter to confirm the faith of this people, converted by Philip the Ëvangelist, now accompanied his Master. Luke had recorded John's resentment against their inhospitality on another journey; and it was natural that the latter should introduce into his own supplementary Gospel this interesting narrative, more creditable to them.

The first three Gospels commence their account of our Lord's Ministry with His return to Galilee, which He opened with the same words as His appointed Forerunner, calling on men to repent. The fame of that *Voice crying in the wilderness* had gone through the country preparing His way, *for all men held John for a prophet*; and all must have heard of the testimony which he had borne to Jesus, when He came to him for Baptism. The direct road from Samaria to Cana would have been through Nazareth; but He went by another route, in order to avoid that town, that He might work His first public miracle in Galilee, at the place where He had begun among friends *to show forth His glory*.

24. *Jesus cures at a distance the Son of an Officer of Herod's court. John iv. 46—54.*

On His return to Cana, an Officer of Herod's court solicited Jesus to accompany him a day's journey to Capernaum, to cure his son, who was dying of a fever. He is supposed by some to have been Manaen, the Tetrarch's foster brother, of whom we read in the Acts (xiii. 1.) as one of the Christians of Antioch; by others, to have been his steward Chusa, whose wife attended upon our Lord, and helped to maintain Him. Jesus, to try his faith, says to him, *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe*, whereas the Samaritans had been convinced without them. This courtier



believed that Jesus could on the spot have restored his son to health, but he does not seem to suppose that He could at a distance. Our Lord, to prove and increase his faith, ordered him to return home, assuring him that his son was recovered. He had only the word of Jesus for the fact, and no similar instance, as far as we know, had yet occurred, yet the officer had faith to believe. A few verses after, it is again said, that when he learnt that the fever had entirely left his son at the very hour that Jesus spoke, *himself and his whole house believed*. We infer that he first believed the truth of the declaration, and that when he found it to be as he expected, he believed in Jesus as the Messiah. Faith appears to have been required as a previous condition for every miraculous cure that was solicited, but it existed in different degrees of strength in different persons. The Centurion spoke with full assurance, *Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed*; the Leper scarcely less confidently, *Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean*: the Father of the Demoniac, whom the Apostles tried in vain to cure, in fainter language, *If Thou canst do any thing, have compassion upon us, and help us*. The faith of the last was alloyed with much doubt, yet Jesus did not despise *this day of small things*; and his case is recorded as an encouraging instance, how graciously He accepts and cherishes the feeblest efforts of a genuine reliance on Him. The Leper doubted His will, the father His power. This faith also varied in its nature; some, like the blind man of Jerusalem, only acknowledged Him as a Prophet, others, like Bar Timæus, as the Messiah. To us His Death and Resurrection evince, that He is both able and willing to deliver His people from the worse malady of sin.

25. *Jesus applies to Himself Isaiah's prediction of the Messiah.*

*Matt. iv. 13—17. Luke iv. 16—32.*

Jesus now visited Nazareth, His own town, in which He had been brought up, and, according to His custom, attended the Synagogue on the Sabbath. The reader was not required to be of the sacerdotal tribe: the ruler assigned the office to whom he pleased, and probably curiosity now induced him to offer it to his townsman. The prophecy of Isaiah was the portion of Scripture delivered to Him, and the Section which He read, (whether the Lesson of the day<sup>d</sup>, or chosen by Himself,) was eminently descriptive both of the nature and manner of the Messiah's teaching, and of the signs by which He confirmed it; and Jesus plainly tells His countrymen, that it is fulfilled in Himself. The passage is thus rendered by the Evangelist, chiefly in conformity with the Septuagint.

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He hath anointed Me  
To proclaim good tidings to the poor.  
He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives,  
And recovery of sight to the blind<sup>e</sup>,  
[To set at liberty them that are bruised,]  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord<sup>f</sup>.*

Here he closed the volume, omitting the following clause—

*The day of vengeance of our God,*

<sup>d</sup> According to the present order of Lessons which the Jews maintain to have prevailed then, this sixty-first chapter is to be read on the day before the Feast of Tabernacles; but it is remarkable that it omits this passage, not commencing till the tenth verse.

<sup>e</sup> For, *recovery of sight to the blind*, the present Hebrew text hath, *opening the prison to the bound*; but the same miracle is foretold by the Prophet in another place, xxxv. 5. The line in brackets is neither in the Hebrew or Septuagint, but is found in lviii. 6.

<sup>f</sup> Hale's Translation.

wishing to fix their attention on the present year of jubilee, which beyond all others deserved that title.

He must have added, as customary, some exposition ; for the Evangelist informs us, that they admired His discourse, and were astonished at His abilities, knowing that from His education as a Carpenter's son He had not enjoyed the same opportunity of improving them as other teachers. But their prejudices were not subdued, and they reproached Him in their hearts with not healing the diseased at Nazareth, His own city, as He had done among comparative strangers at Capernaum. He replied to their thoughts, for they do not appear to have uttered them, that they were not worthy, as they did not receive Him even as a Prophet; and He justified His conduct by the example of Elijah and Elisha, who had worked miracles on the heathen, in preference to their own ungrateful and persecuting countrymen. They were so enraged by His reproof, that they hurried Him to the brow of the precipice on which Nazareth stood, to throw Him down. He eluded their fury by rendering Himself invisible, and passed unseen through the crowd. He declined working a miracle, because they had already had sufficient evidence to satisfy any candid mind ; and it is not in accordance with the Divine Wisdom, to grant such as would be irresistible. Our Lord is sometimes reproached by objectors, for not always informing the people explicitly of His office: this transaction proves the wisdom, and indeed necessity, of His caution. He here, almost at the commencement of His Ministry, publicly avowed Himself to be the Messiah, and the service of the Synagogue was terminated by their fury. We may suppose, that if in other places He had been equally open, He would have been disturbed by similar interruptions. Jesus now chose Capernaum as His ordinary abode, where He taught regularly on the Sabbath days; and thus the neighbourhood of the lake of Galilee became, as Isaiah had

foretold, (ix. 2.) the chief scene of His public life. Several reasons might determine His choice, such as its populousness, and its distance from Jerusalem, the seat of the Scribes and Pharisees; for when in the beginning of His Ministry He made many disciples in Judæa, they took such offence, that He had deemed it prudent to retire into Galilee. He had also here Peter's house for a home, and the countenance, it may be presumed, of the Officer of Herod's court, whose son He had cured, if not of other leading inhabitants. The Lake also afforded Him an easy passage to the neighbourhood, and would facilitate a retreat, whenever the jealousy of Herod, or the impatience of the multitude to proclaim Him King, should render it expedient.

26. *The miraculous Draught of fishes.* Luke v. 1—11.

Mark i. 16—20.

The curiosity and interest that Jesus excited in a populous country, exposed Him to great inconvenience. He often therefore taught from a boat, which, while it kept the multitude from pressing upon Him, was near enough to the shore for them to hear Him. On the first of these occasions recorded, when He had finished, He desired Peter, in whose boat He was, to launch out into the deep water, where He might fish. Peter, though unsuccessful the preceding night, the best season for fishing, obeyed, and his ready obedience, an evidence of faith, Jesus rewarded by so extraordinary a Draught, that the net brake, and both his own boat, and that of the sons of Zebedee, who came to assist, were ready to sink with the weight of the fish. He required them to give up their trade, and follow Him. The demand, and their immediate compliance, appear extraordinary; but Simon and Andrew, who were with the Baptist, had already become the disciples of Jesus, on hearing their

master's testimony to Him as the Lamb of God. This we learn from the supplementary Gospel (i. 40.) of St. John; and we infer from the narrative the same of the Evangelist himself, who probably had brought to Him his brother James. Jesus had ordered Philip to accompany Him into Galilee; He might also require the presence of these, and they were, we conclude, among the disciples who were with Him at the wedding at Cana. They seem to have been only in occasional attendance, and to have pursued their occupations till He chose Twelve to be with Him constantly. We are disposed to consider them as poorer than they really were: Simon and Andrew were in partnership with Zebedee and his sons James and John, and had hired servants under them. Peter, who was married, had a house; and his speech afterwards, *Lord, we have left all, and followed Thee*, indicates that he must have had some property, at least the boat by which he gained a livelihood. Their ready acquiescence is also less surprising, if with most Harmonists we consider the call in Matthew and Mark to be the same with that which Luke connects with the miraculous draught of fish; and His declaration in all three, *Ye shall be fishers of men*, seems to confirm it. This event, emblematical of their future missionary success, would be a powerful encouragement to them to follow a Master, who thus proved Himself to be at least a divinely-commissioned Teacher; and considerately showed, that He did not require them to abandon their fishing, without being able to maintain them. Peter, however, was satisfied that He was more; for his speech, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*, seems to mark his conviction of His Divine nature; and neither then, nor on any future occasion, does our Lord reject or condemn such an acknowledgment. It appears intelligible only on this supposition, and harmonizes with the fear of seeing the Almighty, so often expressed in the Old Testament; as by

Manoah, *We shall surely die, because we have seen God.* (Judges xiii. 22.) The comparison<sup>s</sup> between their trade and the office to which they were called peculiarly suits the Missionary, who knows not whom His Gospel net may catch, what number, or in what direction. That of a Shepherd, better represents the settled Minister in a Christian land. This Miracle, like that of the Loaves, was as it were repeated. At the first miraculous draught Peter was appointed to his office; he was reinstated in it after the second. In the first the net breaks, the number is marvellous, and taken into the ship; in the second it is specified, and drawn to the shore. This at the opening of the Gospel history, like the Parable of the Net inclosing good and bad, typifies the Church in the world; that the state of the Elect in heaven. In the fisherman's calling are required dexterity, patience, and readiness to endure hardship; and the habits formed in it would be useful to the disciples, when they became fishers of men. A calling too so variable in its returns must have a greater natural tendency to bring out reliance upon Providence, than husbandry or any other occupation in which industry is ordinarily more regularly and more surely recompensed. Their Faith in Him that called them was soon confirmed by a succession of Miracles, in which He demonstrated His power, not over fish only and diseases, but also over invisible Spirits.

<sup>s</sup> Trench on this Miracle.

27, 28. *Jesus works all manner of miraculous cures: those of a Demoniac, and of Peter's wife's Mother, are specified. Matt. viii. 14—17. and iv. 23—25. Mark i. 21—34. Luke v. 18—26.*

In the synagogue, a man under the dominion of an unclean Spirit, addressed Jesus as the Holy One of God. This testimony, whether forced by conviction or intended to injure Him, He rejects as on other occasions, but commands the Spirit to leave the person he had enslaved, and he having thrown him into convulsions, however reluctant obeyed. This miracle, though wrought on the Sabbath, is not said to have given offence; there might be no Pharisees present, or they might be glad to be freed from the annoyance of the demoniac. The congregation was astonished, but their astonishment produced no salutary effects.

There are modern writers who endeavour to explain away demoniacal possession, because they hear of no instances of it, and because the belief in it in former times has been abused by impostors. In this they contradict the uniform doctrine of the Church from the beginning, and have been confuted by the most approved commentators, who show that greater difficulties embarrass their scheme than the received opinion. The objectors assume, that the Evangelists were under the influence of national prejudice; and that as under the old dispensation inspired authors like their contemporaries, being ignorant of the discoveries of modern science, wrote not in a philosophical but a popular manner, so our Lord accommodated Himself to the language and notions of the Jews. These writers, however, overlook the distinction between natural and moral subjects, and the different effect of erroneous opinions on the two. A man who supposes that it is the sun and not the earth that moves, may, in moral and religious knowledge, be equal to him who

has a correct acquaintance with astronomy ; but a belief in demoniacal possession, if false, must lead to errors of a practical nature ; and we cannot suppose that our Lord would humour the insane by adopting their language, especially after their restoration to a sound mind. If the demoniacs had been such, though some worshipped, others might have reviled Him ; but all these afflicted persons, or rather the demons who speak through their organs, *believe and tremble*, and evince a knowledge of His nature and office, which was hidden from the wise and prudent of the human race. The manner in which He argued against those who charged Him with casting out demons through the cooperation of their Prince, assumes the reality of possession, which He affirms in a confidential discourse with the Apostles, when He says, *this kind goeth not out but with prayer and fasting* ; and among the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which He conferred upon them, He specifies both curing the sick, and ejecting these unclean spirits. St. Paul's exercise of the latter is recorded in the cases of the damsel at Philippi, (Acts xiv.) and of the seven Jewish exorcists at Ephesus. (xix.) The Evangelists likewise discriminate between disease and possession, placing even lunacy under the former division, and state cases in which patients suffered from both. The possessed too is never described as under any mental delusion, but as struggling between his own will and that of the demon. The fact also is confirmed by a statement of their number in certain individuals ; for Mary Magdalene is said to have been possessed by seven, and the Gadarene demoniacs by at least two thousand. The sufferings of these wretched persons greatly varied in degree, we may conjecture, with the number of their tormentors. This demoniac of Capernaum could attend divine service, others dwelt apart from mankind in tombs, injuring themselves and others. Some when delivered from their oppressors were convulsed



and left half dead, others seem scarcely to have suffered. In the English Testament these unclean spirits are called Devils, but in the original, the Greek word so rendered, though applied in its primary sense to human beings, (John vi. 70. 1 Tim. iii. 11.) is restricted to their Prince; and they are called demons, a term used by the heathen in a good sense to designate their inferior deities, who occupy the middle rank between their greater gods, and their heroes or deified mortals. A reverence for demons is the literal signification of the word, rendered in the Acts (xxv. 29.) *Superstition*, but there it ought to be translated *Religion*, as the governor cannot be supposed to speak offensively of his faith to king Agrippa; and the same remark I think applies to the use of the derivative from it in St. Paul's address to the Athenians.

Jesus immediately retired into Peter's house, where He cured his wife's mother, who was confined to her bed with a fever, and she arose and waited upon them at their meal. This seems to be mentioned to show that her recovery was so complete as not to have left the usual lassitude. The Protestant reader is struck with the fact thus incidentally noticed, that the Prince of the Apostles, whom the Romanists describe as sole Governor of the Church, had a wife, and believes that the miracle has been partly recorded to confute their doctrine, that the clergy ought not to marry. They cannot plead, that he was a widower when sent forth after the Ascension to exercise his Apostolic office, for, according to Clement of Alexandria, she lived long enough to become a martyr; and if this be doubtful, we know, upon the sure testimony of St. Paul, that Peter availed himself of the right which that Apostle claimed, though he did not exercise it, of having a wife as well as himself maintained by his converts. (1 Cor. ix. 5.) The Greek Church, taking his instructions to Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 2.) and to Titus (i. 6.) literally, goes into the con-

trary extreme, requiring her ministers to be married. The Scriptural permission is expressed too strongly to be denied. The Council of Trent therefore enforces the celibacy of Priests on account of its expediency, and pronounces it to be a question not of Doctrine but of Discipline, which may be abrogated by the proper authority. The decision upon such grounds appears to me more culpable than if it was founded upon a mistaken interpretation of Scripture, since it assumes the right of imposing upon a whole body of men a restriction, which was never commanded by God, who has even declared through an Apostle, (Heb. xiii. 3.) that *Marriage is honourable in all*.

At sunset, when the Sabbath was ended, all the sick, and persons possessed with demons, were brought to Him, whom He cured; and such was the sensation that this excited, that He found it expedient to leave the town before day-break for a desert, and afterwards to move about through Galilee, not making any long stay in one place. As wherever He went He taught in their synagogues and cured every disorder, His fame spread far and wide, not only in the Holy Land, but in the whole of Syria; and multitudes followed Him, not merely from Judæa and Galilee, but even from beyond the river. Matthew represents these Miracles as the fulfilment of that prediction of Isaiah<sup>h</sup>, *Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses*, which is in general exclusively explained of the removal of the penalty of transgressing the divine Law. We learn from him, that it applies also to the taking away of bodily diseases, which are likewise consequences of Adam's offence; and our Lord connects the two together, when He appeals to His cure of the bedridden paralytic, as a proof of His having forgiven his sins. As ancient events prefigured those in the life of Christ, so some of His actions seemed to typify others. Health bestowed upon the body is a signi-

<sup>h</sup> *Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.* (liii. 4.)

ficant figure of purity restored to the mind; this prophecy therefore may be said to have been twice fulfilled; first, when He went about healing the sick; and, secondly, when by His death on the Cross He obtained the remission of our sins.

29. *Jesus miraculously cures a Leper. Mark i. 40—45.*

*Luke v. 12—16.*

The next Miracle was wrought on a Leper, not slightly diseased, but *full of leprosy*, cured on his own petition. A word would have effected the cure, but Jesus touched him, disregarding ceremonial uncleanness, and in performing the Miracle asserts His Sovereignty, *I will, be thou clean*; adopting the very words in which the Leper clothed his petition, *If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean*. In this cure He prefigured His power of forgiving sins, in that of the paralytic He declared it. The Leprosy is an infectious disease of the skin, of slow progress, which during our intercourse with Palestine, through the Crusades, was not uncommon in our own country, as may be inferred from the hospitals founded for Lepers, but is now of very rare occurrence. In hot climates it is accompanied by formidable symptoms, such as mortification, and is considered incurable. *Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?* (2 Kings v. 7.) was the speech of the king of Israel to the Syrian monarch, who desired him to order the Prophet to cure his general Naaman. It was an emblem of the pollution of sin; and was regarded as a Divine judgment, probably because known to be such in the instances of Miriam, Gehazi, and Uzziah. Lepers were obliged to live apart, at a distance from habitations; not even kings were exempted from this law; (2 Kings xv. 5.) and the sister of Moses herself, when leprous, was put out of the camp. (Numb. xii.

14.) They were also required to make themselves known by their dress, and to warn any that approached them of their uncleanness; but this, it seems, was not because the disease was contagious, but because it was disgusting. The cleansing a leper with a word or a touch is an undeniable Miracle, for an immediate change must be effected in the whole mass of the blood. The priests are required in the Law to ascertain a leper's recovery; our Saviour therefore charges this person to show himself to one, that he might offer the appointed sacrifice, which, like that of the scape-goat, peculiarly typifies that sanctification could only be obtained through the future Deliverer. This would authenticate his cure, and thereby restore him to society; and would be, at the same time, a Testimony to the mission of Him who cured him. St. Matthew says, that He was forbidden to proclaim the cure; St. Mark adds, that He disregarded the prohibition. One reason of it was, that the fame of His Miracles brought such crowds around Him, that He was now, as often afterwards, obliged to retire into the wilderness. Another why He enjoined, as in this instance, silence on the Jews, was, that He would not needlessly exasperate His enemies, and so urge them on to premature designs against Him, and that the priests might not deny the cure. It is observable, however, that the injunction was seldom obeyed. When He wrought Miracles on heathens, or persons dwelling among them, as in the case of the Gadarene demoniacs, He bade them declare what God had done for them, for it was only from the declaration of the former that He was likely to suffer. Attention to the circumstances of persons will in this, as in other cases, remove apparent inconsistency.

30. *Jesus forgives the sins of a Paralytic man, and restores to him the use of his limbs. Mark ii. 1—12. Luke v. 17—26.*

This miraculous cure was followed by another of a Paralytic man, who, being unable to walk, was carried upon a bed by four persons, and the strength of their faith appears from its surmounting ordinary obstacles. Jesus was then in the house discoursing before no common audience, but an assembly of doctors from Jerusalem and every town of Judæa and Galilee, when this suppliant unexpectedly appeared before Him. The crowd before the door was impassable, they therefore mounted the outer staircase with the Paralytic, and let him down on his couch through the opening in the roof. The reply of Jesus must have astonished them all. It was, *Son, be of good cheer*,—but not the use of thy limbs are restored, but—*thy sins are forgiven*. He might know that the disease proceeded from intemperance, and that the sufferer was more distressed by the cause than the effect. No doubt He had also in view the instruction of His audience, for they were offended by this language, as a blasphemous invasion of the prerogative of God. Instead of denying their position, *Who can forgive sin but God alone?* He tacitly acknowledges its truth, for He proceeds to show, by the bodily cure of the patient, that He, the Son of Man, possessed this power of God. Omnipotence was alike required to restore the use of this sufferer's limbs, or to forgive him; and the proof they had of the first, ought to have satisfied them that the second was as easy to Jesus, though it could not be exhibited to their senses. His speech also showed that He possessed another attribute of the Deity; for His reply was not to their words, but to their thoughts, which on this occasion they did not venture to express. His conclusion they would not acknowledge, but they were

amazed and silenced, while the patient was so perfectly restored as to be able, as commanded, to walk home, carrying his bed; and he and the spectators glorified God.

31. *Matthew is called, and obeys. Matt. ix. 9. Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27, 28.*

After this, a Publican, who was sitting at his office by the lake side to receive the duties upon goods, was invited by Jesus to follow Him. Without hesitation he renounced the profession which maintained him, to become the disciple of a Master, who offered him in exchange only toil and suffering and reproach. He became the first historian of His ministry, and records this transaction, but without any commendation of himself. Living in Capernaum, he must have seen some of the Miracles of Jesus, and had probably heard His discourses; nor is it improbable, that, like those Apostles who had been called to be fishers of men, he also might before have occasionally attended on Him. The tribute of the Roman provinces was farmed by the order of Knights; the Publicans of the Gospels were those to whom they underlet them, and these, we may presume, were generally natives and some of them wealthy. Zacchæus, who is styled a chief Publican, a receiver, probably, of all the taxes of Jericho, was both; and this Galilean, on quitting his profession, was rich enough to provide an entertainment for his new Master. The three Evangelists connect it with his call, but they do not say that it followed it immediately; and Harmonists in general, I think with reason, place it after the return from the country of the Gadarenes. He is called Levi by Mark and Luke, but is better known to us under the name of Matthew, which he gives himself. The office of collecting Taxes, in its very nature unpopular, becomes

odious in the eyes of any nation, when they are levied for the support of a foreign Power; but the Jews had special reasons to regard it as infamous in their countrymen, since it not only brought them into familiar intercourse with despised Gentiles, but they regarded the payment as an acknowledgment of the right of the Romans to govern them, and therefore a virtual rejection of the sovereignty of God. Our Saviour might purposely choose an Apostle out of this despised class, to reprove this national prejudice. We may perceive from the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, that the latter was considered as nearly synonymous with extortioner. They had strong temptation to enrich themselves, by exacting more than was due, especially in a province remote from the seat of government; and the low estimation in which they were held, would be at once both cause and effect of dishonesty. Yet, as there were Pharisees who were not hypocrites, so, no doubt, there were Publicans who were exceptions to the general character; and nothing is hinted against the integrity of Matthew.

## PART IV.

32. *The cure of the Cripple at Bethesda. John v.*

A.D. 29.] SEVERAL instances of Miracles wrought on the Sabbath are brought together. The first was at a Feast, which must have been the Passover, if it be correctly connected with the incident of the Disciples rubbing together the ears of corn; and the day was chosen by Jesus, to afford Him an opportunity of publicly showing that He was the Messiah. The place was a deep Bath near the sheep (gate), called Bethesda<sup>a</sup>, House of Mercy, with five porticos, under which *the blind, halt, and withered lay* in hope of a cure. The received Text describes them *as waiting for the moving of the water; for an Angel went down at a certain season, and troubled the water; whosoever then first after the troubling stepped in, was made whole of whatever disease he had.* The passage is not noticed by Nonnus, in his metrical Paraphrase of this Gospel, and is wanting in the best MSS.; still the speech of the sufferer seems to require it. The Evangelist, however, is only responsible for the fact, which must have been known to the whole city; the cause assigned was the common belief. Attempts have been made to give a natural explanation of the phænomenon, but they are so unsatisfactory, that it appears to be useless to repeat them. Whatever agency was employed, it is not unreasonable to imagine, with Lightfoot, that it might please God just before the coming of the Messiah to provide this natural type of a better Bethesda, that fountain to be opened (Zech. xiii. 1.) for moral uncleanness, not at

<sup>a</sup> Since the time of Helena, the name has been given to a large excavation near St. Stephen's gate, which has been long dry. The ellipsis it is generally understood ought to be supplied, not by *market*, with our translators, but with *gate*. Nehemiah iii. 1.



a certain season, but at all; not only in Jerusalem, but in all places; not only for one, but for all spiritually *impotent folk*. The man selected from the multitude had been suffering thirty-eight years from debility, occasioned by sin, and was too poor to pay any person to help him into the Bath. Notwithstanding, he persevered in waiting, though in his case a cure seemed to be impossible. Jesus not only cures him, but orders him to carry his bed, which would give his cure the greatest publicity. The subject of the miracle entertained, we may presume, the same opinion respecting the Sabbath as the rest of his countrymen. The trial therefore of his Faith was heightened, when he was called upon not only to take up his bed, an apparent impossibility, but to do it on a day on which the carrying of a burthen was forbidden not by Tradition, but by the Law; for this was one of the breaches of the Sabbath, which Jeremiah (xvii. 21—27.) had been commissioned to declare would kindle a fire that should devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and which Nehemiah had been careful to correct. (xiii. 19.) The man was convinced, however, that the Person who commanded this breach of the Sabbath had been endued with power from God; and his miraculous cure satisfied him that He was entitled as a Prophet to dispense with the Law. Jesus withdrew, but afterwards meeting the man in the Temple, admonishes him to sin no more; and he told the Jews, that is, probably, the Sanhedrim, who was his Benefactor, but it does not appear from a bad motive. If candid, they would have believed that a satisfactory reason could be shown, why the commandment should be broken, for the sake of a cripple who had been so long a sufferer; but that would not justify the carrying his bed, which was neither a work of necessity, nor of charity: Jesus, therefore, takes a higher ground than on other similar occasions, and asserts that He is not amenable to the Law; *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*; an

argument which could have no weight or even meaning in the mouth of one who was only such a man as themselves. His hearers rightly considered it as equivalent to claiming equality with God ; and instead of denying their conclusion, or explaining away his own declaration, he goes on to confirm it by asserting, that the Son of God performs the same acts as the Father, who has given to Him the power of doing works more extraordinary than this, even the Restoration of life to the dead, making Him to have life in Himself, and has assigned to Him the final judgment of all men, because He is also the Son of man, declaring thereby to those that had ears to hear, that in His Person were joined together both the Divine and the human nature. The reason He gives for this appointment is, that He may receive from men equal honour ; and He adds, that *he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that hath sent Him*. The Anti-Trinitarian pleads, that the worshipper of Christ robs the Father of the honour due to Him alone ; but how can any Christian, who believes that these are His Master's words, dare to disobey so positive a command, or persuade himself that he honours the Father by refusing to act according to His will ? Obedience is the honour He specially requires, and those who perversely withhold from His co-equal Son the homage of praise and prayer, are deprived of all excuse by the Apostle Paul, who expressly assures the Philippians, (ii. 11.) that confessing Jesus Christ to be the Lord, is *to the glory of God the Father*. We who know that His Resurrection declared Him to be the Son of God, and believe that He now sitteth on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having all power in heaven and on earth, acknowledge the reasonableness of His claim ; but it appeared no doubt an extraordinary one to those who saw Him only in the form of a Man. Jesus, therefore, does not require them to believe Him on His simple assertion, but abundantly supports

it by evidence which no ingenuous mind could resist. First, He appealed to the testimony of the Baptist, by their own confession an inspired teacher; in whose *light they were willing for a season to rejoice*; and next, to testimony more decisive than that of any man, the testimony of God Himself. This is generally supposed to be an appeal to the Voice from heaven, which proclaimed Him at His Baptism to be God's beloved Son; but this interpretation is hardly compatible with the declaration that immediately follows, *Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape*. I conclude, therefore, that He appeals to this testimony as manifested indirectly by *the works which the Father had given Him to finish*, and more directly in the Scriptures which they believed and searched, and which so plainly revealed Him, that Moses who wrote of Him, and in whom they trusted, would accuse them of wilful blindness in not acknowledging Him.

There are persons calling themselves Christians, who, like these Jews, cannot discover Christ in the Pentateuch; yet surely this speech should convince them, that they, like these, have hitherto read it with a veil over their hearts. Moses expressly referred them to the Prophet who should be raised up to them *out of their brethren*, His whole ritual was typical of Christianity; and the Baptist's calling Jesus *the Lamb of God*, and His own comparison of Himself to the Brasen Serpent, are alone sufficient to justify the remark. Jesus tells them that they cannot believe; but their inability was of a moral, not a physical nature: they could not, because they would not; it proceeded not from a defect of understanding, which would have been innocent, but from a want of inclination, which made them sinful. The cause was, they had no real love of God, though they affected to be jealous of His honour; but, as He tells them, preferred to His approbation the praise of men. They afterwards followed false Messiahs, who accommodated themselves to their carnal

expectations; but Jesus they would not receive. Nay, they even sought to kill Him, both for this breach of the Sabbath, and because by calling God His own Father, in a peculiar sense He had made Himself His equal<sup>b</sup>. It became therefore necessary that He should again withdraw from Jerusalem.

33. *The disciples pluck ears of corn, and rub them in their hands on a Sabbath. Matt. xii. 1—8. Mark ii. 23—28. Luke vi. 1—5.*

This Miracle is followed by two other events, which likewise took place on Sabbaths, and gave Jesus an opportunity of laying down the principle which ought to regulate its observance, the benefit of man. The first was, His disciples plucking and eating ears of corn, as they walked through a field; the second, His curing a man who had a withered hand. The first occurred on a Sabbath called Deuteroprote, the signification of which is disputed, but means, I apprehend, the First Sabbath after the Second day of unleavened Bread, upon which the First-fruits of the harvest were offered, which period suits the fact. This plucking and rubbing of the corn was prohibited by Tradition as a sort of reaping. The motive of the disciples must have been hunger, for our Saviour silenced the objectors by the example of David, (1 Samuel xxi.) who, on his flight from Saul, fainting for want of food, ate of the loaves of the presence, which was only lawful for the Priests, and this was probably on the Sabbath, on which day they were removed from the table in the sanctuary. They blamed not David, because necessity excused his dispensing with a ceremony; and He also proved, that such a rigid observance of the Sabbath was impracticable, as the Temple service of the day must have ceased,

<sup>b</sup> It is to be regretted, that our translators have much enfeebled this passage by leaving out *ἴδιον*, *own* or *peculiar*, which could be said with propriety of none but Him, the Monogenes, *Only-Begotten*. John v. 18.

unless the Priests had been allowed on it to prepare and slay the victims. They would have conceded, that the service of God was a lawful exception; He therefore anticipated them by saying, *One greater than the temple is here*; intimating, that if the priests were blameless for an unavoidable breach of the Sabbath when incompatible with a higher duty, no censure ought to attach to His disciples if they broke it by their attendance on a Master, who was more truly than that worldly sanctuary the Temple of God; thus, as when He cleared its courts of the traders, declaring it to be typical of Himself, He added, that *the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*; and concluded with telling them, that it was His own institution, and that He, as *Lord of the Sabbath*, might, when He saw fit, dispense with its observance.

34. *Cure of a man with a withered hand in a Synagogue.*

*Matt. xii. 9—15. Mark iii. 1—6. Luke vi. 6—11.*

On another Sabbath, after teaching in a Synagogue, probably that of Capernaum, Jesus miraculously restored to a man the use of his withered and contracted right hand. The man had no doubt the same prejudices as his countrymen; but there was something in the manner of Jesus, that satisfied him that they were unfounded, and therefore his cure was the reward of his Faith. Christ ordered him to stretch out his hand. The ability to do this is the very power he wanted: had he refused, pleading inability, his hand would have continued as it was, but he *endeavour*ed to obey the order, and in the *endeavour* he obtained the power. So, in moral precepts, whatever God commands us to do, He likewise promises to do for us. Thus He commands by Ezekiel, (xviii.) *Make you a new heart and a new spirit*; and He promises by the same Prophet, (xxxvi. 26.) *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.*

Whatever metaphysical difficulties may present themselves in the attempt to reconcile our freedom of action with the Divine decrees, still the language of the Bible is plain; *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean*, (Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) saith the Almighty. Are we then to do nothing, but simply to wait for the accomplishment of His pleasure? No; certainly no more than the cultivator of the soil, who ploughs and sows not the less diligently, because it is *God that giveth the increase*; for after these positive promises it is added, (Ezek. xxxvi. 37.) *I will yet for this be enquired of, to do it for them*. It is our duty both to work and to pray. We must exert ourselves as much as if all was in our own power; our reliance upon Divine aid must be as strong as if we could do nothing. In this instance alone of the many in which His contemporaries reversed the Divine demand, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*, we are informed that our Saviour's indignation was excited. He looked round with anger, but His anger was combined with pity for the subjects of it. He was grieved for the hardness of their hearts. There does not appear to have been any violation of the Sabbath, even according to their Traditions, for the man only stretched forth his hand. The cripple of Bethesda had really broken the Law, but these supposed violations of it were but the far-fetched burdens; too heavy to be borne, which interpreters laid upon men's shoulders. The forbidden works are reduced by the Rabbis under twenty-nine general heads; but even had these Miracles violated the Mosaic Sabbath, they were justifiable; the first as a work of Necessity, the second of Mercy. And indeed, according to their own interpretation, a true Miracle, as wrought with the consent of the Author of the Law, carries with it its own vindication. Our Lord on this occasion silenced objectors, by an appeal to their own conduct. If a Jew did not scruple to take out of a pit his sheep, which fell

into one on the Sabbath, either out of regard to his property or compassion to the animal; could they reasonably object to His delivering, on that day, a man from a disease, or restoring to him the use of a limb? This act would have produced on candid minds a change of conduct, if not an acknowledgment of error; but these perverters of the Sabbath were only irritated by it to such a degree, as to deliberate with the partizans of Herod for the destruction of Jesus. He therefore retired to the lake side, where multitudes followed Him; and there He performed on those who needed them miraculous cures.

*On the Perpetual Obligation of the Sabbath.*

As the rigid and servile observance of the Sabbath is censured so often by our Lord, there are persons in the present age, when the opposite error has succeeded, who justify the laxity of their own practice from His example and remarks. His example, however, when He dispenses with it, cannot be pleaded by us, who are not, like Him, *Lord of the Sabbath*; and His remarks do not extend beyond works of Necessity and Charity. As He assures us that God prefers mercy to sacrifice, we need not scruple to omit the appropriate duties of the day, when they interfere with such. But let us not deceive ourselves, but remember, that they cannot be fairly said to interfere, when the works proposed may be done as well on the day after. If every seventh day is to be consecrated to His service, (and by calling it the Lord's day we profess as much,) the commandment will not be fulfilled by an attendance on Public Worship, which can occupy but some hours. Few, it is granted, can devote the whole to God, and some will need more intermission of the duty than others; but how our time should be divided between innocent

relaxation and religious occupation, such as meditation, self-examination, private prayer, and the perusal of the Bible and devotional books, must be left to each individual's discretion: only let him remember, that what is a duty, is at the same time the means of Grace; and that if he follow the Prophet's direction of *not doing his own ways, or finding his own pleasure, or speaking his own words*, on God's holy day, he will, though it may at first be irksome, in the end find that it is justly called *a delight*, (Isaiah lviii.) and will rejoice at its return. Worldly business desecrates it no less than worldly pleasure. Travelling or riding is a gross violation of it, which occasions the breaking of it by others, and deprives animals of the rest which their Creator has kindly designed for them. The man of business should suspend on this day of rest his worldly concerns, and the student should refrain from secular study. The rule our Saviour gives is this, *the Sabbath was made for man*, that is, for the promotion of his happiness; and as man is immortal, and responsible to his Maker for his conduct, the end of the institution will be best attained by such employment of it as will qualify the soul for a happy eternity. Still, as he is a compound being, the body is not to be neglected; and the very name applied to the seventh day, and the reasons assigned for hallowing it show, that rest from labour was the primary object of its appointment. To the great majority, who earn their *bread in the sweat of their face*, this interval of cessation from toil has been found, by experience, to be essential to the maintenance of health and cheerfulness; nor is it less necessary to those whose pursuits occupy and fatigue the mind. To both classes a stated recurrence of rest and recreation is desirable; nor can we justly blame them, if they seek refreshment from social intercourse with their relatives and intimate friends. The Sabbath is not a Fast, but a Feast; it should therefore be kept as a day of rejoicing; still, our rejoicing should be



within such limits as will not interfere with the rest to which others have a right as well as ourselves, and in such a spirit as is compatible with keeping it holy to Him, who, though through His Providence He is ever acting, rested on it from the work of Creation, that all His creatures might enjoy every seventh day a cessation from labour, and that those whom He had endowed with reason might devote it to His service, and to their own spiritual improvement.

Few will deny that such an employment of the Lord's day would be rational and edifying, but all will not allow that it is enjoined by Divine authority; for some with Paley (in his *Moral Philosophy*) maintain, that the Fourth Commandment is no longer binding. The Church of England, however, by incorporating the Decalogue into her Liturgy, and by putting into the mouth of the congregation a petition for grace to keep each Commandment, pledges her members to the religious observance of one day in seven; and her decision is in conformity with the opinion of the great majority of Divines, of other Denominations as well as of her own Communion. For a full refutation of plausible objections, which the nature of this work permits me only to notice briefly, I refer the reader to President Edwards, (*Sermons*, vol. vii.) Dr. Dwight, (iv. 1—54.) and Bishop Horsley, (*Sermons*, 21—53.) It is obvious, that those who deny the perpetuity of the Sabbath, must endeavour to show that it was an ordinance peculiar to the Jews, and that as such it was to be abolished with the rest of the Ceremonial Law. Now it must be allowed that Jehovah thus speaks by the prophet Ezekiel (xx. 12.) concerning His ancient people, *I gave them My sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctifieth them*; and Paley argues, that to be such a sign, the observance of it must be limited to them. I observe in reply, that though the Sabbath be also a type of the rest promised in Canaan; and in the

repetition of the Fourth Commandment in Deuteronomy, (v. 12—15.) the Deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt is assigned as the reason for keeping it holy ; these are only new reasons, which could not supersede the original one announced before, when the command was given from mount Sinai. No subsequent declaration could release the Israelite from the obligation of commemorating on the seventh day the Creator resting from Creation, unless it had been formally repealed ; and this obligation clearly does not arise out of the Sinai Covenant, but is binding upon him not as a child of Abraham, but as one of the human race. The inspired historian of the Creation concludes his narrative with informing us, that God sanctified the seventh day, because on it He had rested from all His works. The natural and all but universal interpretation would determine the dispute ; for a commandment given to the parents not of the Israelites exclusively, but of all nations, would have been obligatory on all their descendants. The end too of the institution holds out the same universality of application. Paley therefore is forced to assume, that the words declare only the reason for which God sanctified the Sabbath, not the time when it was done ; forgetting it should seem that the reason which was good in the time of Moses, was no less good in that of Adam. An arbitrary supposition, so much at variance with the usual unaffected simplicity of the writer, could only have occurred to one who felt the natural interpretation to be subversive of his hypothesis. Rejecting the received account of the appointment of the Sabbath, he is obliged to seek for a subsequent one, and he thinks he has found it in the declaration of Moses in the wilderness, when the elders reported that a double portion of manna had been gathered on the sixth day of the week ; (Exodus xvi. 23.) *To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath to the Lord.* Most who read the passage will, I think, agree with me, that his language is that of one re-

minding others of a known, yet probably neglected, duty ; and the word *Remember*, which introduces the Fourth Commandment, is also more suitable to the reenactment of an obsolete ordinance, than to the recent promulgation of a new one. That Commandment is generally considered as establishing the Perpetuity of the Sabbath ; but an ingenious attempt has been made to deprive it of its universal application, by showing, that it is not, like the rest, a moral, but only a positive, precept. The distinction, however, will be found to fail, when we consider, that the Sabbath was intended to give all mankind an interval of rest, during which they might serve their Creator, and that such an interval was not more requisite for a Jew, than for the other descendants of Adam. The duty of social worship is admitted by both parties ; yet unless a particular day be previously set apart, and that by an authority to which all will submit, its due performance would be impracticable. Our conclusion is strengthened by the consideration, that the other nine Commandments are allowed to be universally binding ; for it is most improbable that one should essentially differ from all the rest, and should, if it were not of a moral nature, have been included in the Decalogue, promulgated with such awful solemnity, that not only the people *intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more*, but even Moses said, *I exceedingly fear*. (Heb. xii. 19—21.) Twice, as it should seem to mark that it was never to pass away, was the Decalogue engraven on tables of stone by the finger of God Himself, whereas the rest of the Law was not even spoken to the assembled nation, but apart to Moses, and he was ordered to write it. The Perpetuity of the Sabbath may also be inferred from the Divine Blessing both *on the sons of the strangers and on the eunuchs, who keep it from polluting it* ; which Isaiah (lvi.) was commissioned to announce. The Mosaic law forbade the admission of the latter into the congregation ; yet in this prophecy, *they*, as well as *the outcasts of*

*Israel*, are described as *worshipping and made joyful together* in God's Temple, here declared to be a *House for Prayer for all nations*. There can therefore be no doubt that it refers to the Gospel dispensation. The parallel drawn in the Epistle to the Hebrews (iv.) between resting from the works of Creation and of Redemption, has also convinced some eminent Theologians, that there *remains* in this sense *to the people of God the keeping of a Sabbath*. But the strongest argument is derived from the language of the Lord of the Sabbath, who strongly and repeatedly condemns a superstitious and uncharitable manner of keeping it, yet has never made a remark that has a tendency to annul or even lessen the obligation. He charges them to pray that their flight from Jerusalem should not be on the Sabbath day; and His declaration, that *it was made for man*, implies that it was designed to continue as long as the race for whose sake it was made. I conclude from these premises, that the commandment was prior to the grant of manna, and that it was given immediately after the Creation to our first parents in Paradise before their fall, and that the day which was the seventh to God, and the first of their existence, was consecrated to His service. If the conclusion be correct, the obligation is not impaired by the abrogation of the Mosaic Code, even if we give up the Fourth Commandment, but continues binding on all their posterity to whom it was transmitted by tradition. Homer and Hesiod, the earliest of profane writers, call the seventh day Holy; and Josephus says, "no city of Greeks or Barbarians can be found which does not acknowledge this period of rest from labour."

The change of Day is the principal difficulty, but it is by no means insurmountable. The institution obviously consists of two parts, the Sabbath, or holy rest, and the Day on which it is observed. These are kept distinct from each other in the original enactment. The Lord rested on the *seventh* day, and blessed the *Sabbath* day, and hallowed it. The

keeping holy one day in seven I regard as an ordinance for ever ; and this ordinance may be kept as beneficially on the first day of the week as on the seventh, and also as properly, if the festival be transferred by a competent authority. None, we allow, is competent but that which enjoined it. The change is not affirmed in Scripture ; but Christians with few exceptions believe, that there are passages from which it may be inferred ; and we know, that those who could not be ignorant of the practice of the Apostles, as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Irenæus, kept the Sabbath on the Lord's day. St. Paul's instructions to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. xvi. 2.) to lay by on the first day of the week, and the manner in which he passed it at Troas (Acts xx. 7.) in preaching and breaking of bread, afford a strong presumption, that the change had then taken place ; and the Apocalypse informs us, that Sunday had, in St. John's time, (i. 10.) obtained its appropriate title, which it probably had enjoyed from the time that the Lord made it peculiarly His own, by rising on it from the grave. We infer, that the Apostles, whom He had authorized to bind and to loose, had been instructed to substitute the first instead of the seventh day for the Sabbath of the new Dispensation ; and the Author of both seems to have prepared His people for the change, even in the promulgation of the old, by appointing the first day of the week for the Festival of Pentecost, on which Christianity was first announced, and was accredited by the descent of the Holy Ghost, *when the Law went forth*, instead of Sinai, *from Zion*. The cxviii<sup>th</sup> Psalm, memorable for its prediction of our Saviour's triumphant Resurrection, declaring this to be *the day which the Lord has made*, invites His Church to rejoice in it. The sabbath, after falling into disuse, was revived in the wilderness, as a sign between God and His chosen people, (Ezek. xx.) to keep them from relapsing into idolatry, by reminding them that on that day they were delivered from the Egyptian house of

bondage. As such it ceased with the Jewish economy; but the patriarchal Sabbath, which commemorates Creation, is unaffected by this abrogation; and though Christianity has transferred it to another day, it has not abolished but strengthened the institution, by superadding to its original intention a devout acknowledgment of the superior blessing of Redemption, that is, of the Creation of the New-Man, not like Adam, only in innocence, but like Christ, in *righteousness* and true *holiness*. (Eph. iv. 24.) We maintain that God *hallowed* a seventh portion of time from the beginning, that all men might also hallow it; and let us never forget, that He has also *blessed* it. All must perceive that it is a blessed institution to the lower classes, as far as their temporal good is concerned; and if we have any spiritual discernment, we shall discover that it is still more blessed to the soul without distinction of rank. It is a fact, that, in proportion as the Sabbath has been honoured in any country, Religion and Morality have flourished; and He who instituted it has often set His seal to the appointment, by making His ministers on this day the instruments of converting sinners, and of strengthening and improving His faithful servants.

35. *The appointment of the twelve Apostles. Matt. x. 1—4.*  
*Mark iii. 13—19. Luke vi. 12—16.*

We have already seen, that Jesus had chosen out of those who believed in Him a select few, to whom He might impart, in the first instance, those doctrines more fully and confidentially, which in due season, after He was withdrawn from them, they were under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, also to communicate to the world. He now called them to a constant attendance, and henceforward they never left Him, except by His command, when He sent them forth on a mission, strictly limited to the Jews. He afterwards con-

ferred upon them the power to form, govern, and, through the ministers they should appoint, perpetuate the Church. *As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you*, is His commission; and as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls our Lord *an Apostle*, so our Lord designates them as *His Apostles*, that is, legates or envoys. Four of these had been with Him from the beginning, Peter and Andrew, Philip and Nathaniel; and probably James and John, whom He entitled Sons of Thunder. Levi was called afterwards, and James, Jude, Simon, Thomas, and Judas Iscariot, were now added to complete the number which seems chosen in order to show, that it was God's design, through their ministry, to gather into His fold His ancient people; and Christ Himself says of them, that they *shall sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. After the distinction between Jew and Gentile was done away, the eleven, with Matthias whom they had taken into their number to supply the place of the traitor, proclaimed salvation, in Christ's Name, to all who would accept it; but an extraordinary Apostle, himself also a Jew, and appointed not *by men*, nor *through man*, but directly by Jesus from heaven, was the principal agent in the conversion of the Gentiles. The twelve are arranged in pairs, probably because they were afterwards sent out two and two. The arrangement is not exactly the same in the three Gospels; for Matthew modestly puts his own name after that of his associate Thomas, and retains his opprobrious designation *Publican*, which the other two Evangelists omit. Peter, who is at the head of all, took the lead after the Resurrection, and opened the kingdom of heaven both to Jew and Gentile; but it is clear that he was not appointed the Vicar of Christ, as Governor of the Church, since Christ Himself has expressly declared their equality, saying, that He is their Master, and *all ye are brethren*. (Matt. xxiii. 8.) Peter, James, and John, however, were most in His

confidence. All were Galileans, and it is observable that several were relations, and others personal friends; thus we have the brethren Andrew and Peter, the two sons of Zebedee, and the three sons of Cleopas. The four former were partners as fishermen; and these, with one if not two more, that is, Philip, and it may be Nathaniel, were natives of the same town, Bethsaida. Four, or, if we may depend upon the tradition that makes Bartholomew the same as Nathaniel, five, were originally disciples of the Baptist, and therefore prepared to follow Jesus, whom their master declared to be the Lamb of God. The testimony borne to Nathaniel by Jesus, shows that he was worthy of this distinction; and what we know of his history renders it probable; for the other disciples of John who believed on Christ were made apostles. He was one of the party fishing, to whom Jesus appeared after the Resurrection; he is not spoken of to supply the place of the traitor; and in all the lists, Bartholomew is paired with Philip, the friend of Nathaniel; and as his name only signifies whose son he was, it may well account for his having another peculiarly his own. Andrew was converted before Peter, whom he brought to Jesus; but the latter is perhaps named first, because the elder; and this may also be the reason of James being placed before John. Thomas appears to have been a fisherman, and his name in his own language, or as translated Didymus, marks him as a twin. James and Jude, both writers of Epistles, were the sons of Cleopas, or Alphæus, and first cousins of our Lord; and relationship to Him might be the reason why the Apostles appointed the former to preside over the Church of Jerusalem. James is called the Less, as younger, perhaps, than his namesake, the son of Zebedee, like whom he suffered martyrdom. Jude or Thaddæus is surnamed Lebbæus by Matthew, to distinguish him from the future traitor, who bears the title of Iscariot, it is thought, from his birth-place. He was entrusted by our



Lord with what property he possessed, and at the Last Supper must have reclined very near to Him; from which we infer, that he was more in His confidence than the rest, with the exception of Peter, James, and John. Simon, who was the brother of James and Jude, that he may not be confounded with Peter, has the epithet Canaanite, which Luke interprets a zealot; a word used originally in a good sense, but which afterwards, from the conduct of those who bore it, came to mean a bigotted and intolerant supporter of Judaism, and one who did not scruple even to assassinate those whom he regarded as God's enemies. All, we cannot doubt, faithfully fulfilled their ministry, till it was terminated by martyrdom or natural death; but with the exception of Peter, James, and John, Scripture records little of them, and ecclesiastical history gives us slight and doubtful accounts of their subsequent labours.

Our Saviour was a constant attendant on public worship, both in the temple, and in synagogues; and several instances of His private devotion are recorded; for in this, as in other acts of duty, His precepts are confirmed by the living law of His own practice. The night before the appointment of the Apostles He passed in solitude, in fervent prayer; and thereby teaches us, that, previous to any undertaking of importance, we should solicit the blessing and direction of our heavenly Father.

36—38. *The Sermon on the Mount.* Matt. v. vi. vii.

Luke vi. 17—49.

Jesus had before this preached in the synagogues; but now, probably, no building could have contained the multitude which His miracles drew around Him, and therefore He ascended an eminence, sitting down, as was the custom

of the teachers of His age and country. From its locality this discourse has received the name of the Sermon on the Mount. We have a similar one in St. Luke's Gospel, spoken on a plain; but the difference may be reconciled, by assuming, that, after curing the sick below, Jesus, in order to be better heard, removed to a rising ground. Several of the sentences contained in both may have been repeatedly uttered: but the variations are so few, that I regard them as two copies of the same discourse. Both commence with Beatitudes, and conclude with the same simile; there is scarcely any additional matter in St. Luke's; and the omissions, in his abridged report, of the false glosses and hypocrisy of the Pharisees, are explained from his writing more especially for the use of Gentiles. Both Evangelists relate, that after the discourse Jesus came into Capernaum, and healed the servant of a Centurion; a cure attended with circumstances, which I can hardly conceive to have happened twice, especially in the same town. Luke has only four instead of eight beatitudes, addressed to the Poor, the Hungry, Mourners, and the Hated and Reviled, which we learn from Matthew's fuller report must be taken for the Poor in Spirit, those that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, and those that are reviled for Christ's sake. They are also contrasted with four woes, not recorded in the Sermon on the Mount. His order is preferred, because Matthew seems to have anticipated the time, that he might give near the opening of the Gospel a specimen of his Master's preaching. But whether we place it before or after the appointment of the Twelve, I conceive that there is no reason to restrict the application of the Sermon to them at that time, or to the ministers of religion at any future one.

Strange as it may seem, there have been critics who have found fault with this heavenly doctrine. "To resist no injury, to take no care for the morrow," says Lord Bolingbroke, "seem fit enough for a religious sect, like the Essenians;

but reason and experience both show, that, considered as general duties, they are impracticable, inconsistent with natural instinct as well as law, and quite destructive of society." Such remarks may be natural in the mouth of a sceptic, but there are even Christians, to whom Christ's precepts are hard sayings; and instead of raising their lives to His perfect standard, they either lower that standard to their own inclinations, or ingeniously endeavour to prove, that it does not apply to them. Some among Roman Catholics resolve them into councils of perfection, not designed for ordinary believers; while there are Protestant divines, whose religion forbids their acquiescing in this distinction, who, like Clarke and Tillotson, inform us, that "this discourse was not intended for a general and standing rule to all Christians, but only designed for His immediate disciples, to take *them* off from all care about the things of this life, that they might attend upon His person, and wholly give themselves up to that work to which He had called them." James Blair, an early American Divine of our Church, combats this exposition, "as an odd and dangerous opinion, and as opening a great gap," as if there were any part of this Sermon not binding upon all private Christians as such. Justly does he maintain, that, throughout, pastors were not instructed in opposition to laymen, nor the Twelve in opposition to other disciples, but the followers of Christ in opposition to heathens, hypocrites, scribes, and pharisees. The context proves that he is in the right; for the word *disciples* includes, not merely His constant followers, but all who for a season attended on His teaching; and we know, that the people were also within hearing, for they are said *to have been astonished*. His Apostles then, and the Clergy now, may be, above their brethren, *the light of the world*, and *the salt of the earth*; but all Christians, though under no ordination engagement, are bound by their baptismal vows to preach the Gospel, by the example

of a Christian life ; being like the Jews of old, as St. Peter tells us, *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, who should show forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.* (1 Pet. ii. 9.) That Apostle, who was present at this Sermon, takes it not exclusively to the Twelve ; but in the same spirit in which it was there said, *Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect*, writes to all, *As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy.* (1 Pet. i. 15.) There are some believers now, who require, as much as the Apostles then, to be taught the lesson of reliance upon Providence for the morrow's food and clothing, and many who much more need the warning not to lay up treasure upon earth. The same maxims too are reproduced by the Apostles, when writing to the whole congregation : thus St. James (v. 12.) is as strong against swearing as his Master ; and St. Paul reproaches the Corinthians (1 Cor. vi. 7.) for not suffering wrong, instead of going to law. The popular opinion therefore may be adopted as a true one, that this Sermon is addressed to all Christians, of all times, subject only to such limitations as right reason, under the guidance of religion, will, in each case, easily point out ; and this I think will be allowed by every candid person, who reflects, that if these precepts be impracticable in their full extent, it is only on account of the wickedness of mankind. Even in the present state of society, the practice of some of the most self-denying will be found by experience to have *the promise of the life that now is*, as well as of *that which is to come*, and is therefore recommended by prudence as well as by benevolence. In proportion as the Christian spirit prevails, these precepts will become easier ; and if that spirit were universal and perfect, there would be no opportunity at all of performing the hardest<sup>c</sup>, since there would be no offences to forgive, and no injuries to bear.

<sup>c</sup> Archbishop Newcome on our Lord's Conduct.

Many are surprised that this Discourse, the longest specimen we have of our Lord's teaching, should contain so little of the peculiar doctrines of Revelation; and the fact has been perverted by those who would wish Christianity to be considered as nothing more than a purer and more comprehensive system of Morality, and forget, that though Christ be our Instructor and Example, this inestimable benefit is but a subordinate one, and that the object for which He came into the world was to be the propitiatory Victim, offered as a sacrifice for our sins. It should be remembered, that perfect obedience to the Divine Will, that is, the consecration of all the faculties of man as instruments of righteousness to the glory and service of the Giver, is the ultimate end which Revelation professes; and that it is our Saviour's grand design in this Discourse to rectify the popular lax interpretations of the moral Law, and to bring his hearers back to the true standard, the Word of God rightly understood. He declares, that He requires a righteousness exceeding that of the strictest observers of it in His time; whereby He, by anticipation, guards believers from an Antinomian abuse of Christian liberty, and by preaching the law in all its spirituality, as extending beyond overt acts to the desires, strips them of every plea of self-righteousness, and convincing them of their inability to keep, in their own strength, *commandments so exceeding broad*, draws them to *the throne of grace* to solicit pardon for the past, and assistance for the future. Such is the proneness of fallen man to be satisfied with himself, that, like the young man in the Gospel, if he has led a regular and decent life, he is inclined to say of God's commandments, and with sincerity, *All these have I kept from my youth up*. As St. Paul expresses it, he was *alive without the Law once*; but when that is laid open to him in its whole extent and spirituality, and with the awful threatening denounced against every breach of it, he per-

ceives that he is a condemned sinner, and feeling that he has no merit to plead, throws himself unreservedly upon God's mercy. The Law faithfully expounded drives him to the Gospel for refuge from just condemnation; and then the Gospel sends him back to the Law with a desire, and in a degree the power, of keeping it, not in the vain hope by it to earn salvation, but to show forth his gratitude to God, who hath pardoned and accepted him, has given him a conviction that *it is holy, just, and good*, and has written *it on his heart*.

“It is argued by some expositors, that this Sermon contains all things needful for salvation; but most certainly the unchangeable God never meant to recommend one part of His revealed will, by disparaging another. And who have ever unreservedly and cordially endeavoured to obey these sayings, except they who have firmly believed the doctrines of the Gospel? This Sermon, doubtless, contains the grand outlines of Christian practice, but Christian doctrines must be learned from the other parts of the sacred oracles<sup>d</sup>.” It should ever be borne in mind, that our Saviour differs from all other teachers of His religion in this particular, that He came into the world to *act*; and that His actions, that is, His dying for our sins and His rising again for our justification, are the subject of Christian Preaching. These doctrines He could not bring out so prominently, as it is the duty of His ministers to do. His enemies would not have suffered it, and His disciples could not bear them, till their minds had been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that gift which, on His ascension, He obtained for men. Still He was not silent on these points. There are, even in the earlier Gospels, continual allusions to them; and St. John, who wrote to supply former omissions, has many discourses, in which the divinity of Christ, and the doctrines of justification, and sanctification

<sup>d</sup> Scott's Commentary.

through His death, are revealed by Himself to *those who have ears to hear*.

In the surrounding multitude there might be a few who followed, from hunger and thirst after righteousness; but the majority were attracted by the wealth and honours, which they conceived that He, as the Messiah, was about to bestow. The great majority of mankind have ever placed Happiness in the gratification of the senses, the more enlightened few have come nearer the truth by substituting for it intellectual enjoyment; but it was reserved for our great Teacher to show, that it is only to be found in the proper direction and regulation of the affections. Happiness is the “end and aim” of all men, though they pursue it by various roads: it was natural, therefore, that it should be the grand subject of discussion in the Grecian schools of philosophy; and our Lord, to correct the mistaken notions of mankind, opens this Discourse with declaring what persons are really happy, contrasting, though without an express comparison, the children of this world and the children of God. He pronounces, *Blessed*, or rather *Happy*, the *Poor in spirit*, *Mourners*, the *Meek*, *they which hunger and thirst after righteousness*, the *Merciful*, the *Pure in heart*, *Peace-makers*, and those *who are persecuted for Righteousness sake*. To each He assigns the appropriate recompense. *The meek shall inherit the earth*. This had been announced before by the Psalmist, and can hardly be understood literally; the others are reserved for a future state, for there only can men *see God*, or enjoy the kingdom of Heaven. Yet these rewards may be partially possessed here, for here in a degree shall those who *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, be *satisfied*, and the *merciful receive mercy*. These Beatitudes have been called the Christian paradoxes, for they place happiness in a disposition of mind, in which no man of himself would seek it, yet in which alone it will be found. These blessings are pronounced as

detached Aphorisms: but we are not to suppose that these qualities can exist apart; they will all meet, though in different proportions, in the same individual, and together form the Christian character. “There are,” says Paley<sup>e</sup>, “two opposite characters under which mankind may generally be classed: the one possesses vigour, firmness, resolution; is daring and active, quick in its sensibilities, jealous of its fame, eager in its attachments, inflexible in its purpose, violent in its resentments. The other, meek, yielding, complying, forgiving; not prompt to act, but willing to suffer; silent and gentle under rudeness and insult, suing for reconciliation where others would demand satisfaction. The former of these characters has ever been admired by the world; the latter, which it despises as abject and poor spirited, is the subject of our Saviour’s commendation.” Our Lord had concluded His beatitudes with that of those who were reviled and persecuted for righteousness sake; but as the Christian might shrink from opposition to the world, or wish to withdraw from its temptations, He proceeded to declare, that he must live for others as well as for himself, and illustrated their duty by comparing them to Salt and Light. The former, which preserves meat from corruption, was used as emblematical of purity in every sacrifice; (Mark ix. 49.) but if it *lost its savour*<sup>f</sup>, it was *good for nothing*, not even for manure, but was *cast out*. This comparison warns them to retain their faith for their own sake, as well as that of others. That of Light teaches them, that as a Lamp is made for giving light, they must not hide it, but place it on a stand, that is, show forth their good works, not for ostentation, but that others may *glorify their Father which is in heaven*.

Many imagined that the Messiah was to abrogate the Law.

<sup>e</sup> Evidences; part ii. chap. 2. On the Morality of the Gospel.

<sup>f</sup> Maundrell, in his Travels, mentions a rock of salt which had become tasteless on its surface.



He therefore solemnly declared, that it is of eternal obligation, even in the minutest particulars, and that He came not to *destroy but to fulfil* it. As the substance of its shadows, the real Victim which its sacrifices only prefigured, He fulfilled the Ceremonial Law, and by fulfilling abolished it; but here He was speaking of the Moral Law, which He fulfilled, as the subject of it, by perfect obedience, and as a Legislator, by reenacting it in its original purity, and by teaching men to observe it, not according to the current corrupt interpretations of the Scribes, but in its spirituality, which, though so imperfectly understood, had been designed from its promulgation. He first declared, that *not one jot nor one tittle*, that is, not the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, or point that distinguished one from another, that is, none of its commandments considered as least, should *pass from the Law*, but should be kept and taught in the kingdom of heaven, and that none should enter it, whose morality did not excel that of their present teachers, the best of whom lowered its standard by limiting it to overt acts. This He illustrated by an exposition of some of the prohibitions of the Decalogue, showing, that they include the desires from which crimes originate; as the sixth Commandment, Hatred; the seventh, Lust. Knowing that the desire, unchecked and indulged, will, when opportunity favours, break out into sin; nay, is sin already, in His eyes, who can look into the heart, and who judges of men, not only by what they do, but by what they wish, He went at once to the source of the evil, and in highly figurative language declared, that we must pluck out the eye of concupiscence, and cut off the hand that would commit violence, if we cannot turn aside the one, or restrain the other. The sixth Commandment was explained by the Scribes, so as to prohibit only actual Murder, and that chiefly on account of the judgment which awaited it as a capital offence; but our Interpreter of the Law extended it to unjustifiable anger, which

generates hatred; for *he that hateth his brother, is in heart a murderer*; and he divides it into three heads, 1. as existing within; 2. as it breaks forth into words of derision and contempt, such as *Raca*, or worthless wretch; and 3. into charging men with extreme infatuation, and rebellion against God, by calling them *Fools*<sup>g</sup>, that is, Apostates, or Rebels. These He declared shall be punished hereafter, each in proportion to its degree, a sentence answering to that of a local judgment, to that of the great Council, and of that of the fire, which were kept burning for consuming the filth of the town in Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom, the emblem of Hell. To the Commandment thus enlarged and fortified, He attached collateral duties, the appeasing of a brother who has reason to be displeased, and a speedy settlement with a plaintiff in a lawsuit when he is in the right. Religious worship, both before and since, has been often made a substitute for moral duties; but our Lord here teaches, that God will not accept it from one who has not previously sought forgiveness from any whom he has injured. The seventh Commandment He combined with the tenth, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife*, and restricts divorce to the case of adultery. In explaining the third, He condemns the casuistry, which, by ingenious distinctions, maintained, that only some vows were obligatory, and therefore excused the performance of others, showing, that an oath by Heaven, or by Earth, or by Jerusalem, was in reality an oath by their great King, and that one by their head, as they could not make a hair black or white, was indirectly an appeal to the Lord of the Creation, as an oath by any part of it was equivalent to an oath by Himself. He added, *Swear not at all*, a command which not

<sup>g</sup> *Raca* seems to require in the next clause a word in the same language; and all I think must approve of the conjecture, that the *Fool* of our version, is not the Greek *Moros*, but the Hebrew *Moreh*, *Rebel*, in which term Moses reproached the Israelites, when *he spake unadvisedly with his lips*. (Psalm cvi. 33.)

only Quakers, but some of the Fathers, conceive admits of no limitation. The context, however, shows, that He is speaking of promissory oaths, and of ordinary discourse ; and we may reasonably enlarge the injunction, so as to comprehend the swearing that still occasionally disgraces the conversation of Christians. The frequent practice of St. Paul, (2 Cor. i. 12 ; xv. 14.) and of the worthies of the old dispensation, as Abraham, (Gen. xiv. 22.) justifies, on occasions of sufficient solemnity ; appeals to the Deity, who also swears by Himself ; (Gen. xxii. 15. Heb. vi. 17.) and the affirmatory oaths of courts of justice are approved in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (vi. 16.) as *the end of all strife*, and were sanctioned by our Lord's own example on His trial. Retaliation had been permitted by the Law, and it was extended by the Scribes to private life. This He not only repealed, but commanded His followers to submit cheerfully and readily to injustice, and never to refuse to give or to lend. He subjoined, *Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy*. The latter was the false gloss of their traditionists. This He not only forbade, but commanded them to bless, pray for, love, and do them good, and in this respect to be perfect as their heavenly Father, who causes His sun to rise alike upon the evil and the good, and rains upon the just and unjust ; a comparison which shows that the love required includes the performance of acts of ordinary kindness. Those whose conduct comes not up to this standard, He considers as no better than publicans and sinners.

The religion of the Pharisees was deficient not only in its rule, but also in its motives. Jesus therefore proceeded to warn His disciples against ostentation, and seeking the praise of men, in almsgiving, and in private prayer, and fasting. He condemned those also who deceive themselves by their vain repetitions, repeating continually as the heathen did, and still do, for a length of time, the very same petitions and the

very same titles of their gods, thinking *that they shall be heard for their much speaking*; and then recited as a pattern, both of the form and matter of their addresses to their Father that is in heaven, the Prayer which in consequence we call the Lord's, which He seems to have given them again<sup>h</sup>. It is short, because He knows what we need before we ask Him. Prayer, though necessary as the condition of our receiving, is not required to give information *who seeth in secret*. We solicit forgiveness, on condition of our forgiving; and not only does our Lord teach this in the Prayer, but immediately after affirms that it is indispensable. He warns them not to set their affections on earthly treasure, which is in its nature liable to decay, or of which they may be forcibly deprived; and declares, that it is impossible to unite the service of God with devotion to wealth, which He personifies under the Syriac term *Mammon*, which means that in which men place confidence. He cuts off one chief motive for seeking wealth, by forbidding solicitude for the future, and reproves them for not trusting implicitly in their heavenly Father, who, if He clothe with more than royal splendour the perishable flowers of the field, and provide food for the birds, who *gather not into barns*, will much more supply the necessary wants of His children. He who made them, knoweth what they require, therefore they have no need to wish to extend<sup>i</sup> their lives, since the wish would be useless; and their very existence is itself an earnest, that what He hath made He will preserve: their aim therefore should be to obey Him, seeking *first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*, leaving without anxiety their maintenance to His Providential care.

Admonition follows against the common sin of overlooking

<sup>h</sup> I defer the consideration of the Prayer to its repetition in Section 86.

<sup>i</sup> *Who by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?* A.T. ought in the opinion of the best commentators to be translated *one cubit to his life*. The Greek *ἡλικία* is sometimes used in this meaning, and here the context, and the word cubit which is a great addition to a man's height, seems to require it.

our own enormous defects, while we are curiously seeking after the minute ones of our neighbours; and to prudence in communicating religious truth. They are given in figures, which appear to us exaggerated, but were familiar to the Jews; the first calls a man's great offence a *beam* in his eye, his brother's small one a *straw*<sup>k</sup>. The second discriminates between those, on whom Truth, like a pearl cast to swine, will be only thrown away; and others, like dogs, whom the holy food of sacrifices will exasperate to persecution. Knowing the weakness of our faith, He assures us here as elsewhere, in the most forcible manner, that persevering Prayer will be effectual. *Ask, Seek, Knock*, are three degrees of importunity; the asker shall receive, the seeker find, to him who *knocks*, the door will be opened. And this assurance, that God is a *hearer of prayer*, comes from *Him* who, as His Son, best knows His character. In the same figurative language, He encourages earnest prayer to our perfect Father which is in heaven, from this very title with which He permits us to address the Ruler of heaven and earth; arguing, that if an human father, comparatively so imperfect, will not give his son, who asks him for bread, a stone, (which cannot feed him,) or for a fish, a serpent, (that will hurt him,) how much more shall God give to *them that ask Him good things* for time and for eternity, as Luke leads us to interpret it by substituting *His Holy Spirit*. Our Lord now concludes His practical precepts with a comprehensive maxim, which purifies self-love by making it the measure of our benevolence. *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*. This has been called, and with reason, the golden rule, for it is a guide to conversation and action on all occasions, and of universal application. *This*, he adds, *is*

<sup>k</sup> This, which appears to me a better translation than splinter, was, I apprehend, intended by the Authors of our version; for *note*, generally taken for one of those atoms that people the sun beam, is an obsolete synonym for straw.

*the Law and the Prophets*; that this is the summary of their teaching with respect to our duty to man. It may be collected from them, and as soon as it is stated recommends itself to our judgment and our feelings, and yet it was reserved for Christ to reveal it, since though preceding moralists had approximated to it, none had announced it as an affirmative proposition<sup>1</sup>. Life is then compared to a journey. *The wide gate and broad and frequented road that leadeth to destruction*, are contrasted with the *strait gate and narrow path* of genuine religion. And not only is it narrow, and beset with thorns and briars; there are treacherous guides, who decoy the pilgrim out of the right course; and it is easier for them to mislead the inconsiderate, because, though *ravening wolves* in disposition, they would assume *sheep's clothing*. However, the unholy tendency of their doctrine will sooner or later detect them, for He adds, as a tree is known to be good or bad by its fruits, so will they be in time made manifest. In conclusion, He solemnly declares the unprofitableness of profession without practice. Even the Ministers of His religion, who have prophesied and performed miracles in His name, no less than those who, since these extraordinary gifts were withdrawn, have, according to their natural ability, improved by study, expounded His Gospel, will be rejected by Him in that day, if they have been workers of iniquity. Private believers are also comprehended in this sentence. Finally, He contrasts the end of him who is a hearer, with him who is a doer of His will, by the impressive parable of two men, who built houses of similar appearance; but one fell in the stormy season, being erected on a shifting sand; the other defied floods

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon sneeringly observes, that he had read this precept in the address of Isocrates to Nichomachus, written centuries before our Lord's birth; but it is remarkable, that his maxim, which is found also in Tobit, (iv. 15.) "Do not to others what would provoke you to anger if done to yourself," is negative, and far from being equivalent to this saying of our Lord.

and rain and wind, because it rested on the sure foundation of a rock.

The morality commanded in this Discourse, excelling so much that of the Scribes and Pharisees, both in extent and motives, and such, indeed, as had never been heard from the lips of any other teacher, might well produce astonishment in His audience. But the manner astonished them still more than the matter, because, as Matthew informs us, He taught *not as the Scribes, but as one who had authority*. “It was said by the ancients,” and “This is the exposition,” were the phrases used by the Scribes; but Jesus, assuming the office not of the Interpreter, but of the Enacter of the Law, introduces His teaching with, *I say unto you*; and the solemn admonitions, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear—Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*—show His consciousness of the high office with which He was invested. This manner in any other would have been arrogant and absurd; but it became Him, whose doctrine was not His own, but *that of Him who sent Him*, and who proved by His works that men might depend upon the veracity of His words. He then justly claims Authority, yet in many instances He condescends to state the reasons of His commands: He may therefore require us to trust Him, when He does not see fit to assign any.

39. *The cure of a Centurion's Servant, at the request of his Master. Matt. viii. 5—13. Luke vii. 1—10.*

The most eminent instances of Faith, for they drew forth our Lord's admiration, were exhibited by Gentiles—by a Centurion, and a Woman of Canaan. A Centurion was a Roman officer, commanding, as his name signifies, a hundred men. His pay was only double that of a common soldier;

this Centurion therefore must have had property of his own. That nation in general despised the Jews too much to condescend to inquire into their religion. Even the philosophic Tacitus gives us strange and fabulous notices both of that and of their history; though he might, if he had chosen, have been better informed, since he lived at the same time as Josephus, and in the same city. He however, perhaps justly, represents the Jews as hating other nations; and they were hated or despised in return. This centurion was an honourable exception. He loved the Jews, and it must have been on account of their religion, for he had been at the expense of building the Synagogue at Capernaum; and we may presume that he had renounced the idolatry in which he had been bred, and worshipped the true God. Matthew describes him as coming to entreat Jesus to cure his dying servant; Luke, as conveying the petition first through the elders, and then through other friends; for I agree with the majority of Harmonists, that there was but one such Centurion; and we have a similar instance in the request of the sons of Zebedee, made, according to one Evangelist, by themselves; according to another, by their mother. Probably the Centurion first sent, and finding that Jesus was on the way, hastened out of his house to meet Him. Deeply affected by this act of condescension, he regarded his house, the habitation of a Gentile, as unfit for so holy a Person to enter. Being full of faith, and perhaps calling to mind the cure at a distance of the son of the courtier of the same town, he added, that it was not necessary that Jesus should so demean Himself, and illustrated his meaning from his own subordinate rank and power in the army. He was only an inferior officer, subject to his Tribune's authority; yet the company of soldiers under him were prompt to execute his orders, and his servant implicitly obeyed him. Jesus then, who was not under authority, but had the command of the heavenly host, had only to send His order



to the disease by one of these, and it would quit the sufferer as readily as if it were spoken on the spot. Such is the inference, not expressed, but which the reader is left to draw, by an idiom not uncommon among the ancients, of which we have other instances in the New Testament. To reward this faith, which realized so high and just a notion of the Messiah, unknown at that time even to His Apostles, the servant was healed instantly; and our Lord took occasion to observe, that many of the Gentiles from distant parts of the earth would be admitted hereafter into the presence of Abraham, when his children after the flesh, cast into the darkness without, would mourn, and gnash their teeth from vexation and envy at their exclusion from the banquet, which they imagined was to be provided exclusively for themselves. The Jews, while miracles of every kind were daily wrought by Him, were asking for a sign, whereas the centurion was fearful of betraying the least distrust in His power. He declared his belief, that He could cure at a distance as well as near, and acknowledged his own unworthiness. This lowliness of mind is the more praiseworthy, because the Romans were a proud and imperious people, and had not even a word in their language that precisely answers to our humility. The centurion, however, possessed this virtue, which predisposes the mind to listen to the evidence, and to relish the humbling doctrines, of Christianity; and his attachment to his servant places his disposition in honourable contrast with most of his countrymen, who treated their slaves with a severity, which the laws of no modern nation would allow, torturing them, and even putting them to death, for trivial offences. It is remarkable, that this is not the only centurion whose praise is in the Gospel. A second, the just and devout Cornelius, was selected to be the first-fruits of the Gentile harvest; (Acts x.) another, Julius, (Acts xxvii.) preserved the life of Paul; and it was a centurion who declared of the dying Jesus, deserted by His

friends and rejected by His nation, that truly He was the Son of God.

40. *The Son of a Widow of Nain is raised from the dead.*

*Luke vii. 11—16.*

This miracle was succeeded by one more amazing, the restoration to life of a young man, whom Jesus met, carried out to the grave, as He was about to enter Nain, a small town in the neighbourhood, mentioned on no other occasion, which He visited probably for this purpose. The miracle, the first of the kind He wrought, made a great impression on the inhabitants, who acknowledged that *God had visited His people*, and that Jesus was the Prophet that should come into the world, meaning thereby the Messiah. Nor was the impression limited to the town, for the act extended His fame beyond the holy land. The deceased was an only son, and his mother was a widow, and compassion for one so desolate, whose misery is so pathetically though briefly described, appears to have been His sole motive, for neither the mother nor any present solicited, or apparently expected, His interference. The multitude of spectators must have been very great, for much people came with Jesus, and a considerable number attended the funeral. We read of many whom He miraculously cured of hopeless diseases, but of no more than three whom He actually delivered from death, and these were in different stages of it; the daughter of Jairus had just expired, this young man lay on the bier, and Lazarus had been interred. It is also remarkable, that the two first were only children, the last an only brother. Such also were those restored by Elijah and Elisha, but strikingly different was the manner. They earnestly prayed, He commanded.

41. *John enquires if Jesus be the Messiah.* Matt. xi. 2—19.  
*Luke vii. 18—35.*

The Baptist, having been now some time in prison, sent two of his disciples to enquire if Jesus were the promised Messiah. Some commentators think that he sent them that their doubts concerning his mission might be removed; others, that his own faith was staggered, since Jesus took no steps to deliver him, and did not even declare Himself; and this seems better to suit the reply, *Happy is he to whom I am not an occasion of stumbling*<sup>m</sup>. His question Jesus did not answer in words which might have given His enemies a handle against Him, but by an appeal to various miracles which He was then performing, and to the fact of His proclaiming the good tidings to the poor. This is the peculiar glory of His religion, and distinguishes Him from uninspired Philosophers, who communicated their opinions only to the intelligent few, while He revealed to all the Truth in which all are equally interested. John had wrought no miracle, and that rendered the evidence derived from His the more decisive, especially as they had been predicted by the same prophet, who had described the Baptist's preparatory Ministry. Our Lord, on their departure, turning to the Jews, bore His testimony to John, as being far more than a Prophet, the Elijah that was to come, the Harbinger of the Messiah. And yet, though none was greater under the old dispensation, the least in the kingdom of heaven, the Christian of the lowest attainments, would be his superior, would be favoured with more distinct views of the Gospel, and enjoy more of its privileges. He then animadverted upon the perverseness of that generation, which was alike dissatisfied with the austere and abstemious habits of John, and His own more social character; observ-

<sup>m</sup> *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* A. T.

ing, that Wisdom, notwithstanding they found fault with both, was justified of all her children, the difference in their modes of life being exactly suited to the different offices assigned to each in the Divine economy.

42. *Jesus upbraids those who had seen His Miracles without repenting, and invites the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him. Matt. xi. 20—30.*

He next upbraided for their unbelief Bethsaida and Chorazin, in which towns many of His mighty works had been done, and declare His willing acquiescence in His Father's decree, that the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven should be concealed from those who were wise and learned in the estimation of the world, and should be revealed unto babes or persons of childlike humility and willingness to learn. He called upon all who labour and are heavy laden to come unto Him, promising that He would grant them not mere deliverance from toil, but the rest which not only puts an end to fruitless labour, but affords a reviving cordial to the wearied spirit. There is not only *peace*, but *joy in believing*; and Christianity provides a rest from the harassing anxieties felt by those whose hearts are set upon this world, a rest from the uneasiness of conscience, procured by a sense of pardoned guilt, and a rest in degree from the power of sin. Preparatory to this invitation, He produced, as it were, His commission from His Father; and for the encouragement of the heavy laden sinner, who longs to come to Him, yet may doubt his ability to fulfil His promises, declared, that all power has been delivered unto Him. The expressions *to labour*, and *to be burthened*, comprehend in their literal sense the different ways in which working animals are employed; they either wear a yoke, or bear a burthen. The moral meaning is clear.

To labour is to pursue the work of sin as an agent; to be burthened is to endure pains and penalties as a passive sufferer. To this miserable course of action and endurance are opposed the blessed activity, and the no less blessed suffering, of the believer's life". The Apostle Peter (Acts xv. 10.) describes the Law which God gave by Moses as a yoke which neither the Jews of his own time nor their fathers were able to bear; and it was rendered still more oppressive by the national teachers, who, as Jesus testified on another occasion, laid *heavy burdens upon men's shoulders, which they would not themselves move with one of their fingers*. In contradistinction to them, our gracious Master invites all *that labour and are heavy laden* to come unto Him, whose *yoke is easy, and whose burthen is light*. He says at the same time, *Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*; and such as will take Him for an example, will find the declaration to be true. He requires nothing but what He has Himself performed before, and on account of His disciples, and in the path which He hath marked out for them, they may perceive His footsteps all the way. His yoke of obedience will in time be found "perfect freedom;" for He promises rest, and not only rest from unsatisfied desires and from the sense of guilt, but peace of mind; for the Greek word ἀναπαύσις comprehends not only deliverance from toil, but refreshment.

43. *A Woman who had been a sinner anoints the feet of Jesus at an entertainment. Luke vii. 36—50.*

An opportunity soon offered of proving Jesus to be in the best sense, what was brought against Him as an accusation, the friend of publicans and sinners—"the sinner's friend, but sin's eternal foe." He accepted a Pharisee's invitation to dinner; and a woman who was a notorious sinner, encouraged perhaps by His late gracious call upon all *who laboured* and

<sup>n</sup> Jebb's Sacred Literature.

were *heavy laden* to come unto Him, entered while He was reclining at the meal. She stood behind, and was therefore unobserved, till her flood of penitential tears wetted His feet, which she then wiped with her flowing tresses, and anointed with an expensive ointment, once probably designed for her own person, but which now she did not think herself worthy to pour upon His head. Simon, looking at this woman's past life, not at her present feelings, formed an unfavourable opinion of Jesus; for he concluded, judging from himself and other Pharisees, that if He had been a Prophet, He must have known her character, and would not have suffered her to approach Him. Jesus answered to his thoughts, for he does not seem to have expressed them, in a way that showed Him to be more than a Prophet, a Discerner of the heart, and authorized to forgive sin. Had He directly remonstrated with the Pharisee upon his pride and his disdain of this penitent, He would have irritated and hardened him; but His indirect reproof through a Parable was calculated to convince and to affect without affronting him. The Creditor represents our Lord Himself; the two Debtors sinners, guilty in a very different degree, yet equally without the smallest power to atone for their sins. The case being put in the form of a question, Simon allowed that the greater debtor would have the deeper sense of obligation to the creditor who freely forgave them both. Jesus having approved of the answer, proceeded to apply it, and contrasted this woman's conduct with his cold reception of Him. Simon had not treated Him with the ordinary respect due to a guest; he had not even given Him the expected refreshment of water for His feet; he had not welcomed Him with the usual salutation, nor anointed His head with common oil; whereas she had continually kissed His feet, had watered them with her tears, and had poured on them a fragrant and costly ointment. She had been forgiven many sins, and *therefore* she

loved much. “*For* she loved much,” is the translation of our Version, with which the Vulgate agrees; and it must be allowed that *ἡ* is usually so rendered. But as it appears that this sinner’s love was the *effect* and *evidence*, not the *cause*, of her forgiveness, which our Lord ascribes to faith, *therefore* is the proper rendering, and this sense, which is supported by the most learned commentators, though uncommon, is not without authority. It likewise best accords with the Parable and the conclusion of His speech, *but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little*. This seems to have been spoken aside to Simon; for Jesus said afterwards to the woman, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*; and when the guests were offended at His assuming this divine prerogative, He confirmed His declaration by observing, that it was her faith that had saved her. She required no bodily cure, He must therefore have meant the salvation of her soul.

Tradition reports, that this sinner was Mary of Magdala; and she is become, in consequence, in the Roman Church, the personification of female penitence. As such, she is a favourite subject with their artists; and in our own country her name has been assigned to a benevolent Asylum, provided by Christian philanthropy in London for women who have deviated from chastity. Objection was made at the time of its erection to this application of her name, and it has certainly no Scriptural warrant, for she is only described as possessed with seven devils, which are in no other instance taken to mean sins; nor is there any reason to suppose, that if she had been the woman who anointed Christ’s feet, the Evangelist would have concealed her name. This portion of Scripture was selected for the Gospel on St. Mary Magdalene’s day, and the Collect in our original Prayer Book was composed in conformity with this tradition. Within three years, however, the Book was revised, and among its alterations was the omission of this Festival; from which I

conclude, that in the interval our Reformers had satisfied themselves, that this sinner had been erroneously assumed to be the Magdalene. The mention of her a few verses later appears to be the origin of this tradition. It is still more extraordinary that she should also in the Latin Church be confounded with Mary, sister of Lazarus, since Christ's anointment by the latter plainly led to our Lord's betrayal.

44. *Jesus cures a Demoniac, and, being accused of confederacy with the Devil, declares, that all Reviling is pardonable, except that of the Holy Spirit. Matt. xii. 22—37. Mark iii. 20—30. Luke viii. 2—4. xi. 14—26.*

Jesus now made another circuit of Galilee, accompanied by His Apostles, and several women, who had been cured by Him of diseases and of demoniacal possession. Some of them, being persons of property, defrayed His expenses; for He not only had, as He told one who offered to become His disciple, no home of His own, but He was unable even to pay the tribute money without a miracle, to such a depth of poverty did it graciously please Him to condescend. Three of them are named, Mary Magdalene; Joanna the wife of Chusa, a person of some distinction in Herod's court, conjectured to be the officer whose son was miraculously cured\*; (John iv. 46.) and Susanna. From her being mentioned first, we conclude that Mary was a person of at least equal rank, and it appears from this connection, and her distinctive appellation, that she was neither the sister of Lazarus, nor the sinner above mentioned, who seems to have been an inhabitant of Capernaum. On the return of Jesus to that town, when the eagerness of the multitude to hear Him did not give Him leisure for His meals, His relations were so far from believing

\* Ἐπίτροπος, the word here used, which is also translated *steward*, is of wider extent than οἰκονόμος, (which answers more accurately to the English term,) and may mean any kind of superintendence.



on Him, that they wished to keep Him within the house, considering Him as disordered in mind.

His cure of a demoniac, who was at once both blind and dumb, being an indisputable fact, while it caused the people to exclaim, *Is not this the Son of David?* provoked from the Pharisees the malignant charge, that He performed miracles through a confederacy with the Devil, the prince of the demons. He repelled it, by showing that He came to deliver men from subjection to evil spirits; and that Satan's reign must be subverted in proportion as His own was established. From the fact of His ejecting demons, He demonstrated the superiority of His power to theirs; illustrating it by the remark, that no one could break into and rob a strong man's house, unless he first overpowered and bound him; and as He came to destroy the works of the devil, the case admitted not of neutrality, but those that refused to act with Him must be accounted as His enemies. He added, that every kind of sin and reviling was pardonable, except one—Reviling the Holy Ghost. It is frequently, but improperly, called the *Sin* against the Holy Ghost; and this inaccuracy has a tendency to augment the alarm which the mention of an unpardonable offence cannot fail to excite. It is *Blasphemy*; and this limits it to something not done, but spoken. Few passages have more alarmed and distressed conscientious yet weak believers, than this awful denunciation; yet taken, as all Scripture ought to be, in connection with the context, we perceive that it was primarily designed as a warning to these His personal opponents, and cannot be committed by any who believe in Christ, though they may grieve, resist, and even quench the influence of the Holy Ghost, by provoking Him to leave them to themselves. Hammond, Tillotson, Waterland, and other eminent divines, are of opinion, that our Lord means the very sin which His enemies were then in the act of committing, the ascribing His Miracles to the devil;

and they seem to be supported by the authority of St. Mark, for he adds as a comment, *because they said He had an unclean spirit*. But Whitby gives a different paraphrase, which Scott approves. "You represent Me as one who casts out devils by Beelzebub<sup>p</sup>, and you will still go on to represent Me as a deceiver of the people; but, notwithstanding, this grievous sin shall be forgiven, if that last dispensation of the Holy Ghost, which I shall send after My ascension, shall prevail upon you to believe in Me; but if, after sending Him to testify to the truth of My mission and resurrection, you shall blaspheme Him by representing Him as an evil spirit, your sin shall never be pardoned." The two senses nearly coincide, and the guilt seems to differ only in degree, the second being an obstinate and wilful perseverance in the first, after additional proof

<sup>p</sup> There is no proper name for the Chief of the demons, who is only known to us by descriptive appellations; as Satan, meaning Enemy in old English, Fiend, the Tempter, and the Accuser. The Jews, who regarded all the gods of the heathen as evil spirits, as appears from this and other passages in the Gospels, transferred to him the title of Beelzebub, which they sometimes in contempt altered into Belzebul, Lord of dung, from the same feeling that led them to change the name of the Samaritan town Sychem into Sychar. Beelzebub means, the Lord Fly, or Lord of Flies, a strange designation, as it seems to us, of a god; yet in a hot country the abundance of them is a plague; and we know that even in Greece Jupiter was invoked as *Ἀπὸμυιος*, the Driver away of flies. But Dr. Hales endeavours to show, that it is no ordinary fly, but the Tzirah, (the Hornet of our version,) which drove out before Israel the two kings of the Amorites. (Joshua xxiv. 12.) As Zebul is a singular, it is probable that the allusion is to this tremendous insect, which seems not to have been a native of Canaan; for Isaiah (vii. 18.) says, that the Lord will hiss for it from the rivers of Egypt. It was by the maddening sting of this fly, called by Æschylus, *Οἷστρος*, by Virgil, (G. iii.) Asilus, that Io transformed into a heifer, was driven by a divine scourge from land to land; and the testimony of Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, proves, that the descriptions of the Poets is scarcely exaggerated. "As soon," says he, "as their buzzing is heard, the cattle forsake their food, and run wildly about the plain till they die, worn out with fatigue, fright, and hunger." *Asper acerba sonans quo tota exterrita silvis Diffugiunt armenta*. This god, who appears as thus represented far more formidable than according to the common notion of him, was worshipped at Ekron, and was consulted by king Ahaziah, (2 Kings i.) in preference to the God of Israel.

that the assertion was untrue. Upon either supposition, the persons thus solemnly admonished were eyewitnesses of facts, which they themselves allowed to be miracles; they were also works, not only of supernatural power, but of benevolence; and he who will not recognise in them their real author, but deliberately ascribes them to diabolical agency, seems to have sinned beyond the reach of forgiveness, since he insults and reviles the only Being who can bring his mind into such a frame as to be a fit object of mercy. Infidels of modern times have miracles only upon testimony, and do not ascribe them to an evil spirit, but only call in question their reality. The difference, therefore, of guilt in the two cases is not in degree but in kind; the one being the offence of the understanding, the other of the heart; still, if the rejected stone, become the head of the corner, shall grind the latter to powder, the former who falls upon it will be broken. Whether or not the most offensive kind of modern disbelief, which reviles the moral character of our immaculate Redeemer, may come under this tremendous condemnation, must be left for His decision, who knoweth the secrets of the heart, and can alone appreciate the temptations of individuals, and their means of ascertaining the truth. Some we know have been reclaimed from the lowest depths of infidelity; and we may be sure, that none, however deep his guilt hath been, who believes and repents, can have committed this unpardonable offence; for genuine repentance and faith are inseparably connected with forgiveness, and being themselves the gift of God, would never be bestowed on those He had determined not to pardon. They who fear having committed it, are generally at the farthest distance from it; while those (if we may presume to form an opinion of their probable future lot) who seem to approach it, are fearless, and well satisfied with their conduct, promising themselves, if they believe in another life,

an eternity of happiness. Our Lord added, that though this species of slander is alone unpardonable, none can be practised with impunity, for an account must be given at the day of judgment, not only of wicked actions, but of every *wicked* speech. The word is ἄργον, “idle word,” which by a common euphemism is put for *pernicious* or *injurious*: and for this meaning, which is confirmed by the various reading πονηρὸν, we have the decisive authority of the Classics and of the Greek Fathers. But though this suits the context better than merely trifling and light conversation, it is, if not noticed here, condemned by St. Paul under the terms εὐτραπέλεια, *jesting*, that is, equivocal language, and μωρολογία, *foolish talking*. (Eph. v. 4.)

45. *The Scribes and Pharisees are reproved for requiring a Sign from heaven. Matt. xii. 38—45. Luke xi. 24—26; 29—32.*

The Pharisees, intimating thereby that the Miracles they were in the habit of seeing were not satisfactory, as they might be performed through collusion with the Devil, demanded of Jesus a Sign from Heaven, meaning, it should seem, that He should appear with the angels in the clouds, according to Daniel’s prophecy, (vii. 13.) and establish as Messiah the universal monarchy of His people. He answered, that the demand showed them to be a wicked and adulterous race, who had degenerated from the faith of their father Abraham, and that no sign would be given to them, except that of Jonah, (authenticating thereby a history that has been often disbelieved and ridiculed<sup>1</sup>), which He declared to be

<sup>1</sup> It has been maintained by the great body of commentators, that Jonah was deposited in the stomach of a large fish; and as the throat of a whale is too narrow to admit the passage of a man, they have assumed it to be a shark; but in avoiding one difficulty they only make another, for a man could not pass through the formidable ranges of teeth of the latter, nor indeed exist in the stomach of any fish, without a series of miracles. But a safe asylum is afforded in another *cavity*, κοιλία, of the whale, in which Jonas might be preserved; not

typical of the period that He was to remain in the grave. They required Him to show Himself as a Sovereign; but that "coming in glorious majesty" was reserved for another period; His own age was only to have the sign of His "coming in great humility." He affirmed, that past generations, who availed themselves of less favourable opportunities, would rise up to condemn them who were unaffected by a preacher of repentance more impressive than Jonah, and uninstructed by a Teacher wiser than Solomon; and He concluded with the parable of an evil spirit, who left a man for a season, but, finding his mind empty and ready for his return, came back with seven others more wicked than himself, thus rendering the condition of the possessed worse than it was before. So, He expressly adds, it shall be to this wicked generation, pointing out their national danger, and indicating that the temporary conviction wrought by the Baptist's preaching having died away, and their evil passions reviving with fresh strength, they would become seven times more hardened than before, and would incur the guilt of wilful presumptuous sin. This sign, His resurrection, was the great evidence of His mission, and the commencement of His reign, but it did not come, as they expected, *with observation*. The parable is a prophecy of the rejection of the Jews, and of their awful state of enmity to the Gospel, which still continues. It is also applicable to such individuals, as, in the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (x. 26.) *sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth, for whom there remaineth no more*

indeed without miracle, but with that economy of miracles so frequently exemplified in Scripture. "At the bottom of the throat is an intestine so large and wide, that a man might pass into it; it is an air vessel, in which are two vents, which serve for inspiration and expiration, and enable the animal to rise or sink at pleasure." And this testimony of a naturalist is of the more weight, as he had not the case of Jonas in view. *Bomare. Dictionnaire d'Histoire Naturelle*. For this remark I am indebted to Bishop Jebb's interesting volume on "Sacred Literature."

*sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.*

44, 45. *Jesus declares who are blessed. Matt. xii. 47—50.  
Luke xi. 27, 28.*

The perseverance of Jesus in teaching the people, notwithstanding the opposition of the Pharisees, gave disquietude to His near relations, who wished Him to desist, supposing that He exceeded the bounds of reason; and they seem to have persuaded His Mother to concur in the design. Aware of their intention, He answered by enquiring who were His mother and His brethren; alluding, it may be, to His higher nature, and certainly implying that they had no right from their relationship to direct or control His ministry. *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* was His reproof to His Virgin Mother, when at the wedding-feast she interfered before the time that He knew to be the fit one for the performance of His first miracle; and now both in words and by a significant action, He declares that His attachment to His true disciples exceeds His natural affection to His family. He assures those who were standing round Him, and through them His faithful followers of every age, that *she* is equal in His estimation to a mother, who performs His Father's will; and a little before, a woman in admiration having exclaimed out of the crowd, Happy she that bare Him! He replied, to the same purport, that rather should they be called happy, *who hear the word of God, and keep it.* Her name is mentioned in the Gospels more rarely than even the Protestant would expect, and this reserve must astonish the Roman Catholic, who raises her to an equality, to say the least, with her Son. We who know the excess, in some instances even idolatrous, in all reprehensible and unchristian, to which the reverence justly due to her has been carried, cannot fail to be struck that so little is recorded of

her, and that the tendency of it is clearly, and we may reasonably suppose intentionally, a prophetic warning to the Church, to lower our estimation of her. Still, as she herself observes, as the Mother of our Lord, *all generations will esteem her happy*, and we are naturally apt to consider the privilege of being His Mother, or even sister, or brother, after the flesh, as enviable. How gratifying then is the assurance, and how should it stimulate us to make every effort to appropriate to ourselves the blessing, that the very state we would have coveted, had we been His contemporaries, may even now be ours; that we may be, nay, that we shall be, if we really keep His word, His near relations, His brethren; and being such, the sons and joint-heirs of His Father.

46. *Jesus, being at dinner in a Pharisee's house, denounces woes against the hypocritical Pharisees, Scribes, and Lawyers.*  
*Luke xi. 37—54.*

Jesus, being at dinner with a Pharisee, who had assembled many of his brethren, probably with the view of ensnaring Him in conversation, His host expressed surprise at His not having washed when He came in, according to the Tradition; and this gave Him an opportunity of boldly and sharply reproving their superstition and hypocrisy. He pointed out the absurdity of their scrupulous attention to outward washing, while their hearts were *full of ravening and wickedness*, and declared that they would be more effectually cleansed by alms than by ablutions. He added, that while they fulfilled the minutest injunctions of the Law, they neglected its weightiest moral precepts, and so became a snare to the ignorant. He observed, that they affected to honour the dead Prophets, and blamed their forefathers for putting them to death; yet, as in their behaviour to Him they imitated their conduct, the monuments they erected

seemed raised less out of respect to the persons slain than to their murderers ; and He concluded with declaring, that the *Divine Wisdom*, that is, He Himself, (as appears from the parallel passage, Matt. xxiii. 34.) would send them prophets and apostles, whom they would in like manner persecute and destroy, so that the punishment of their own sins, and those of their forefathers, would fall upon them. The dreadful vengeance inflicted by the Romans upon the nation was not more than their own wickedness, in crucifying the Lord of Life, had deserved ; yet it was so signal and complete, that, humanly speaking, it would seem an adequate punishment for all the murders of the righteous, from that of Abel, the first who was slain, to Zachariah who perished between the sanctuary and the altar<sup>r</sup>. It is remarkable, that Josephus, (War, v. 13.) speaking of his countrymen, declares, in the strongest terms, that there never was so wicked a race ; and that if the Romans had delayed coming, God would have interfered to destroy them, since they were worse than the people of Sodom. He denounced woe to the Lawyers also, one of whom drew the attack upon them, for imposing upon the people burdens which they would not themselves *touch with one* of their fingers, and would neither enter themselves, or suffer others to enter, into the kingdom of Heaven.

47. *Jesus teaches the people.* Luke xii. 1—21.

Our Lord's reproof exasperated the company, who endeavoured to provoke Him to say something that might afford

<sup>r</sup> Zechariah the Prophet, the son of Barakiah, according to some, though the manner of his death is not recorded in the Bible. Others therefore suppose the Zechariah intended was the son of the High Priest Jehoida, who was stoned on the spot named by our Lord, by command of King Joash, who owed his own life to his father ; and this seems the more probable, because as Abel is the first righteous person, so he is the last whose murder is related in the Old Testament ; and it seems less likely that Jesus should refer to an event not mentioned in history, than that the name of Barakiah should have been substituted for that of Jehoida.



them matter of accusation; but instead of continuing the conversation, He left the house, and in the presence of the people assembled, as it were, in tens of thousands, warned His disciples against Hypocrisy, the leaven which corrupted the religion of the Pharisees. He encouraged them by the endearing appellation of friends not to fear those who at the worst can but kill the body, and suggests the fear of God as the only principle that can emancipate them from this tormenting and ensnaring passion, which man regards as a venial infirmity, but which the Scripture declares will lead to perdition. In some form or other it is apt to beset us all, but it will be subdued by those whose faith can appropriate the assurances that follow, that even the hairs of our head are numbered, that we are of more value than many sparrows, and that whoever confesses the Son of Man before men, shall be confessed by Him before the angels. His discourse was interrupted by a man out of the crowd, who asked Him to desire his brother to divide an inheritance with him. This He declined, as He did whenever called upon to interfere in secular concerns, His kingdom not being of this world; but He availed Himself of the application to caution them against covetousness; and He showed its absurdity by the Parable of a rich man suddenly called into eternity, while deliberately planning the increase of his wealth, and the means of its enjoyment. He is rightly called in the original *ἄφρων*, inconsiderate, or thoughtless, for he not only selfishly anticipates a long possession of his property, when, as the event shows, he has not a day to live, but atheistically reckons upon a continuance of life, as if it depended upon natural causes; and the providence and will of God have no place in his calculations. Jesus warned the multitude not to imitate this unwise worldly schemer, but to make a prudent use of their temporal goods by giving alms, and so securing a treasure in heaven that will not fail. He then foretold, that his religion would not introduce upon earth the peace they expected, but division;

and He charged the people to judge for themselves what is right, and to accept, before it be too late, His offer of mercy, like the prisoner, who, if he is prudent, will satisfy his adversary, before he is brought to the judge.

48. *He cautions them against forming rash judgments.*

*Luke xii. 1—9.*

Pilate had lately ordered some Galileans to be slain while engaged in the act of sacrificing; this was mentioned to Jesus as a judgment; and He Himself told them of eighteen persons, probably Jews, who had been killed by the fall of one of the towers of the city. Such events would be regarded by some as Accidents, by others as Judgments. The former opinion cannot be entertained by those who on the word of Christ believe that not a sparrow falleth to the ground without the Divine permission; and His answer forbids our interpreting them as the latter. He taught them, instead of drawing such unprofitable conclusions from the calamities of others, to look to their own conduct, lest the same should befall them; and the word *likewise* is emphatic; for literally, in such manner, did many afterwards perish during the siege. He then illustrated God's forbearance in still affording to His undeserving people a respite for reformation, by the simile of a gardener requesting and obtaining another year's trial for a barren figtree, which though it had the advantage of being placed in a vineyard, produced nothing but leaves; not only cumbering, that is, uselessly occupying, the ground, but rendering it unproductive. The additional year may mean the period during which, after His Ascension, the Holy Spirit would still strive with them through His Apostles; and this may be considered as extending to the whole period that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. The figtree represents the Jewish nation, from which He had for three years sought in vain fruits meet for repentance; but, like

many other Parables, this has a secondary sense, and warns of their danger all who in any age continue unfruitful under the means of grace.

49. *Jesus teaches in parables.* *Matt.* xiii. 1—53. *Mark* iv. 1—34. *Luke* viii. 4—18.

Jesus, finding the multitude pressing upon Him, withdrew with His Apostles into a vessel, from which He could continue His instructions without being incommoded by them. His teaching on this day is recorded more at length than on any other occasion, except when He spoke the Sermon on the Mount; and this discourse differs from that, in consisting entirely of Parables, a mode of teaching which the malice of His enemies now rendered expedient. It is recorded with variations by the three Evangelists enumerated above, but at the greatest length by the first. The number of Parables is eight; four are peculiar to him, and one to St. Mark; of which four, the Sower, the Tares, the Mustard-seed, and the Leaven, were addressed to the multitude, the rest to the disciples when explaining the others. St. Mark however observes, that with many such Parables He spake the word unto them; we therefore conclude, that these are only a specimen; and so many being here brought together, it seems desirable in this place to offer some general remarks upon

### *Parables.*

The Hebrew *Mashal*, figurative speech, is rendered in the Septuagint by *Παροιμία*, and *Παραβολή*; the former used only by St. John, the latter by the other Evangelists. The etymology of both leads to the idea of comparison, but the word *Parable* includes Maxims, the *Γνώμαι* of the Greeks, even when not expressed in figurative language, as many of those of Solomon; and also such sayings as, *Physician, heal thyself*; and, *If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into*

*the ditch*, which we call *Proverbs*, and are, in fact, condensed Parables. The *Parable* differs from the *Fable*, in as much as it never passes beyond the bounds of reality; whereas it is of the essence of the latter to assign to irrational or inanimate beings, to brutes or plants, the feelings and language of man. The latter seems to be beneath the dignity of the Son of God, or of any inspired Teacher, who has no need to alter the course of nature, but can draw instruction from things as they are. The Parables of Christ assume not only possible but probable events; and are taken generally from events continually occurring; as husbandmen sowing seed, fishermen dragging a net, the hiring of labourers, and the ceremonies of a wedding. All have really happened, and even those which to the ignorant are extraordinary, become to them credible, as they advance in knowledge of history and foreign customs. Thus, the Parable of a nobleman travelling to a far country to obtain sovereignty, had been realised both in Herod and in his son Archelaus: the sowing the seed of a pernicious plant in a neighbour's field is an act of malice too well known in India<sup>o</sup>; and Annas the high priest paid the workmen employed about the Temple a whole day's pay, though they worked but a single hour<sup>p</sup>. The objection to Parables is their obscurity, but this can be said of very few of our Lord's, and the different explanations of commentators chiefly arise from their inattention to the remarks with which they are introduced or concluded. The object of some He has Himself declared, and two, the Sower and the Tares, which He minutely interpreted, afford us a key to unlock the meaning of the rest. The chief difficulty is to ascertain how far the circumstances are significant. Some commentators give a special meaning to all, and carry their system to an extreme, which is fanciful, and sometimes absurd. Others regard them as mere embellishments; yet if a natural and

<sup>o</sup> Roberts's Oriental Illustrations, 541.

<sup>p</sup> Josephus Ant. ix. 7.

suitable meaning can be discovered in them, it gives additional beauty to a Parable, and our Lord's interpretation, which descends to the minutest particulars, encourages the attempt. Calvin, I think, errs on the one side, when he allows no meaning to the oil of the Virgins' vessels, and those, on the other, who find one in the three Loaves. A Parable conveys an important *Moral* under a figure, as the duty of forgiveness in that of the unmerciful servant, and the value of the Gospel in that of the pearl of great price. But from the Fathers down to the present day, interpreters, not satisfied with this, seek for a *mystical* meaning; and this they have sometimes brought out with a piety and eloquence that fascinate and mislead the judgment. But, on reflection, this allegorising, however well meant or edifying, will appear objectionable, from its tendency to draw us from the real moral to another, which, after all, may exist only in the fancy of the interpreter, as we have no means of ascertaining the truth of the most specious; and even in these, as in that of the Samaritan, there is generally wanting a harmony in the details which renders it questionable. Contradictory interpretations are also sometimes put forth. It is safer, therefore, to take the mystical meaning as no more than an uninspired author's pious accommodation. Others attempt to show, that each has a propheticall allusion to the history of the Church; and we must allow, that the Redeemer's death, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ultimate triumph of Christianity, are foretold in them. But when commentators come down to later ages, they only prove their own partiality to the form of Christianity which they profess, since the Parables might easily be accommodated to a contrary system. Thus the goodly pearl is, according to Vitringa, the Church of Geneva; though, as no characteristics are given, it might be applied as well to any other. He also makes the Pope the unmerciful servant; but this is a most unhappy assumption, which recoils upon himself, since it is a

virtual acknowledgment that he is the rightful governor of the Church. These conclusions, drawn by the prejudices of a divine, who has justly earned a distinguished name from his elaborate Commentary on Isaiah, are sufficient, without specifying others, to deter us from speculations, which show more fancy than judgment, and which when called in question cannot be proved. The Fathers complained, that the Gnostics endeavoured to derive countenance to their errors from the Parables: that of the Marriage Feast has by later divines been pressed into the cause of persecution; and that of the Samaritan originated the doctrine of supererogation. We should therefore regard them not as teaching new tenets, but as illustrating old ones, and cite them in support of none that are not set forth in plain terms in other parts of Scripture<sup>p</sup>.

A second meaning is indispensable, for a Parable is a species of *Simile*. This definition will exclude several so called, which are only instructive narratives. Thus, the Rich Fool, the Samaritan, and the Pharisee and Publican, do not, like that of the Sower and others, teach us as Figures, but are themselves Examples. Such tales might be real, but some of them could be only told by Him who knows what others guess, as the Pharisee's prayer; and in that of Lazarus, he takes us into the world of Spirits.

Our Lord's enemies would have turned a positive declaration of His office to His premature destruction, but they could not lay hold of Parables, though their meaning might be as clear; such as those which show Him to be the Messiah, and His opponents to be the enemies of God; and those which upbraid them with their pride and stubbornness, and foretel the admission of the heathen into the

<sup>p</sup> In this edition I have enlarged the general view of Parables, by introducing some valuable observations from Mr. Trench's learned and instructive work on the subject.

Church, and their own rejection. Before, as in the Sermon on the Mount, He had taught without a figure; but the behaviour of the Pharisees that very morning proved the necessity of His guarding against their enmity; and the people, who were much under their influence, were as yet unable to bear the whole undisguised truth. In private He expounded these Parables to His disciples, and gradually prepared them for the plainness of speech which they were afterwards to use. But though this precaution was often necessary, He still was in the habit of teaching in this manner, when His situation did not require it; for it has been always popular in the East, and the Talmud shows that so it continued after His time. To persons of uncultivated minds, that is, the great majority, who feel strongly but cannot reason accurately, argumentative instruction is dry and forbidding, while that which is communicated through the imagination pleases, and attaches itself to the memory. The obscurity in which it is involved excites curiosity; and the trouble it costs to elicit the meaning enhances its value. It gains an easier admission into both head and heart than direct precept: it strikes deeper, and the impression remains longer. It also insinuates reproof with less offence, and often greater efficacy, than open rebuke; and truths, imperfectly seen through this veil, will be endured, which, without any covering, would irritate the hearer, and might be dangerous to the speaker; as is strikingly illustrated in the Old Testament by the parable spoken by Nathan to David. Even our Lord's ordinary speech may be said to be parabolical, for He generally conveys instruction in figures, drawn from the objects before Him. Thus, upon curing a blind man, He styles Himself *the Light of the world*. Beholding the fowls of the air, He leads His disciples to infer, that the Providence of God, which takes care of these His inferior creatures, will not neglect His children: from the money-changers, He exhorts the dis-

ciples to lay out their several talents to the best advantage ; and among the sheepfolds He shows Himself to be the true Shepherd of souls. At a feast He brings master and guests to the consideration of a better entertainment, to which they were all invited ; and from meat and drink, which support the body, He leads them to consider the benefit their souls will derive from bread and wine, as symbols of His offering Himself as a Sacrifice. Thus He improved every thing into an useful moral, and made the objects which we are continually seeing, and the occupations in which we are constantly engaged, a perpetual memorial of His lessons ; so that we may find “ God in the garden and in the fields,” though exhibited more clearly in His Book. His Parables, properly so called, are confined to the first three Gospels ; for that of St. John substitutes for them *Allegories*.

The Parables delivered this day were prophetic, as well as explanatory. The first predicts the different reception of the Gospel by different classes of men ; the second, the corruption of it imperceptibly introduced by the Devil, which will continue to the end of this dispensation. The third and fourth foretel the gradual extension of Christianity in the world ; the fifth, its unobserved yet effectual progress in the heart of the believer ; the sixth and seventh mark the estimate which true Christians will form of it ; and the last shows the nature of the Church, which includes not only the genuine servants of Christ, but also those mere professors of religion, who while they call Him Lord, by their works deny Him.

The Sower is represented as sowing the same seed throughout a field, with different success, according to the nature of the soil. A fourth portion only fell into good ground, and even this varied much in fruitfulness ; for while one field yielded thirty times as much as had been sown, a second seed multiplied itself sixty fold, and a third even a hundred. A gradation is equally marked in the seed that fails ; that



which fell on the hard and beaten pathway comes not up at all; that sown on the rocky soil comes up, but soon withers away, though it looks for a while promising, lacking moisture, and having no depth of earth; while that sown among the thorns even puts forth the ear, but does not ripen. We know from the explanation afterwards given to His disciples by the divine Author of the Parable, that it designates four kinds of hearers of His religion; and probably we shall not press it too much in supposing that there are, generally speaking, but four. As all seed will fail sooner or later that is not sown in good ground, so it is only *in the honest and good heart* that the word of God will endure, and yield a return; and *the preparation of the heart is from the Lord*. The rest it doth not *profit, not being mixed with faith in them*. The first are the careless inattentive hearers, on whom it makes no impression, and who, though they may conform to Christianity, cannot be called with propriety believers. The second understand the doctrines, and appropriate to themselves the privileges, of religion, but *receive not the truth in the love of it*; and *having no root*, though they seemed at first to flourish even more than the genuine believer, in the hour of trial they even renounce their profession. In our time, where there is no actual persecution, this class is not so numerous as the third, who retain profession to the end, but being distracted by *the cares of this world*, or drawn aside *by the deceitfulness of riches*, are Christians only in profession.

In this parable of the Seed, the truth is snatched out of the heart, or lost through the wickedness or weakness of man. In the next, that of the Tares, we have the effect of false doctrine designedly introduced. The produce of the seed sown by Satan, *transformed into an Angel of light*, is only gradually detected. Gross transgressors, either in doctrine or practice, may be known at once; and therefore

this parable does not forbid their excommunication. The persons here represented as tares, are too plausible to be ascertained by human judgment; and as the governors of the Church might confound with them some real yet defective children of the kingdom, their exclusion must be left for the unerring decision of the owner of the field at the harvest. A knowledge of the Plant seems necessary to the understanding the Parable. It clearly could not be the vetch, now called Tares, which, like Wheat, is deserving of cultivation, but some pernicious plant, not easily distinguished from it; and I think there can be no doubt that St. Jerome, who latterly resided in the Holy Land, was right in supposing it to be the *Lolium*, to which Virgil (Georg. i. 154.) has attached the epithet *infelix*, and which in England, where it is also indigenous, is called Darnel. It grows up with wheat, and in an early stage of its growth can hardly be distinguished from it. If the seeds of it should be mixed in any considerable quantity with the corn, the bread will occasion giddiness; and hence it has received the specific name *temulentum*, or Intoxicating<sup>a</sup>. We learn from this Parable, that the Church on earth must consist of unworthy as well as worthy members, and consequently the error of those who secede from it, in order to procure a purity not attainable even in the smallest sect.

The following Parables show, that, notwithstanding all impediments, Christianity will ultimately prevail. The description of Mustard as the greatest not only of herbs but of trees, strikes an European reader as an exaggeration; yet Scott observes in his Commentary, that even in Lincolnshire he has seen it larger than most shrubs; and, in a warmer country, a Rabbi, quoted by Whitby, talks of climbing into one as into a fig-tree. It has been suggested by Mr. Frost, that our Lord meant a species of *Phytolacca*,

<sup>a</sup> Sowerby's English Botany, 1824.

which is of the same natural order, and has the same properties. This is common in Palestine, and as it attains as great a height as any tree from the minutest seed, the proportion between the two would equally recommend it for a comparison; but I think there is no sufficient reason for departing from our version.

The Leaven may represent the moral regenerating influence of the Gospel upon individuals as well as communities, which seems to be also the lesson to be conveyed by the imperceptible growth of the Seed which St. Mark substitutes for it.

The man who accidentally discovers a buried treasure in a field, and the merchant who diligently seeking goodly pearls finds one of great price, both of whom alike willingly give in exchange all that they possess, strongly mark the preeminent value of Christianity, with this difference, that they represent two kinds of converts, the first of whom is sought by religion, and the second is active in seeking it. The Drag-net represents, under a figure as familiar to those who live on the banks of a lake, as the Field of corn intermixed with useless and even injurious grasses to the husbandman, the character of the Christian Church militant upon earth.

Our Lord, having finished these Parables, and ascertained that they were understood by the Apostles, concluded with a comparison relating to the Ministerial office, showing, that as the householder bringeth out of his store both old and new provisions, as the occasions of his family require; so they, and the Clergy their successors, should feed the souls of His people with the spiritual knowledge they have acquired, both from the ancient Dispensation and from His.

*No man having put his hand to the Plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*, is probably a proverb, transferred to all who take upon themselves the yoke of Christ, and especially to His Ministers. It is a warning to them not to engage in so important a work without due deliberation;

but when they have engaged, not to be diverted from it by casting a longing look behind on the pleasures and gains which they have resigned in order to promote His cause<sup>r</sup>.

50. *Jesus stills a Tempest on the lake.* Matt. viii. 18—27.

*Mark* iv. 35—41. *Luke* viii. 22—25.

Jesus, without waiting to refresh Himself, now put again to sea, probably to seek the necessary repose which He could not command on shore. On His way, He detects the insincerity of three persons, who professed, and might really think, that they were willing to become His disciples. The first made the proposal, the others were invited, but all were found to be unfit. The first was deterred by a statement of the privations that must be endured, and the others pleaded family duties, the one the settling of his affairs, the other the funeral of a father. Both are apparently reasonable excuses; but Jesus probably knew that they were no more than excuses, and He replies in figurative language, that shows that neither then, nor now, may any personal or relative concern justifiably interfere with the obedience due to Himself, which it is obvious that it would be unreasonable and immoral for any human teacher to require. The three speeches

<sup>r</sup> The ancient plough was little more than a crooked piece of wood; so that, besides the usual attention to the business, unless the ploughman leant upon it, and, as it were, loaded it with his own weight, [arator nisi incurvus prævaricaretur, Pliny, xviii. 19.] the share would glide over the surface without making any furrows. Hesiod's verses,

Ὅς κ' ἔργου μελετῶν ἰθεῖαν αὐτὰν ἑλαύνῃ  
Μηκέτι σαπταίνων μεθ' ὁμήλικας, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ ἔργῳ  
Θυμὸν ἔχων.

<sup>r</sup> *Εργα*, 441. recommending, that the man who follows the plough should be attentive to his work, that he may make the furrows straight, and not look off to his associates, illustrate our Saviour's saying.

mark the difference of their characters; the first is too forward, the second too backward, the third undecided\*.

He now embarked, and, while they were sailing, from fatigue fell asleep. A violent tempest arising, His disciples, though accustomed to the lake, were alarmed, and, humanly speaking, with reason, for the ship was full of water. They awoke Him, and addressed Him, it appears, with some degree of reproof; *Master, carest Thou not that we perish?* To allay their uneasiness, He immediately issued His commands to the wind and to the waves; and no sooner had He spoken, than *the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.* Considering the evidence they had repeatedly had of His power, their distrust was blameable; He therefore mildly censured them. They were amazed that even the elements submitted to Him, and said to one another, *What manner of Man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?* Thus the storm that threatened their lives was made the occasion of a blessing to their souls, by reviving and strengthening their faith. Some commentators, thinking the words, *Peace, be still*, and the expression, *He rebuked*, too strong to be addressed to inanimate beings, imagine, that the storm was raised by the evil Spirit; but this is a melancholy and dangerous doctrine, interfering, it seems to me, with the omnipotence of the Deity, and not to be admitted unless unavoidable, for He also rebuked a fever; and therefore, if it be allowed in one case of physical evil, it may be applied to all, and thus unintentionally revive the Manichean heresy of a Good and an Evil Spirit contending for the government of the world. An opinion which leads to such results, ought not to rest upon the metaphorical use of a word. In all languages, bold expressions introduced by Poets cease in the course of time to be considered figurative, and are used by the least rhetorical Prose authors: Ἐπερίμνησε may be

\* Boys' *Tactica Sacra*.

of this kind; and is sometimes rendered in the Vulgate *imperabat*; but indeed Command, and all such words, when addressed to inanimate objects, must have been originally figurative.

51. *Jesus suffers the Demons to enter into the herd of Swine.*  
*Matt. viii. 28—34. Mark v. 1—20. Luke viii. 26—39.*

This triumph over the elements was immediately followed by another over the spiritual world; for upon landing on the opposite shore of the Gadarenes<sup>t</sup>, Jesus was met by two Demoniacs, who had taken up their abode in the tombs which had been excavated in the mountain. These miserable outcasts of society were naked, and cut themselves with stones, and were so fierce that no one ventured to approach them, or found it possible to bind them with ropes or chains. Matthew, who was present, mentions, as well as Luke, two, but Mark only one, perhaps because he alone was properly affected by his recovery, and obeyed his Benefactor. Jesus commanded the Demons to quit their victims, and they being questioned, called themselves, on account of their number, *Legion*. The Roman regiment so called consisted of 6000 men; and this speech, though it need not be understood literally, conveys a tremendous notion of demoniacal possession. They solicited and obtained leave to enter into a herd of swine, two thousand in number, that they might not be tormented before their time; and yet the swine rushed immediately down a precipice into the lake, where they perished, seemingly against the wishes of the Demons, who could not control them.

<sup>t</sup> Matthew calls it the country of the Gergesenes, or, according to some Mss. Gerasenes; and Origen decides in favour of the former, because they showed in his time the cliff near Gergesa, from which the swine were said to have rushed into the lake. Gadara and Gerasa, at both of which there are fine Roman ruins, are more distant; but the different accounts may perhaps be reconciled, by supposing the territory of these towns to be contiguous.

The swine-herds, affrighted, fled and told the Miracle in the city, and the inhabitants came out to Jesus, not to implore His protection, but to intreat Him to depart, viewing Him with alarm as a person possessed of supernatural power, but not as disposed to use it for their benefit. One of the dispossessed Demoniacs, who used to be naked, they found in proper clothing, (provided we may suppose by the charity of the Apostles out of their own,) composed and rational, and listening to the instructions of his Deliverer. He was desirous of becoming His constant companion, but Jesus ordered him to return to his friends, and to tell them *how great things the Lord had done for him*. So he began to publish in Decapolis what great things *Jesus* had done for him. This is a remarkable expression, since it shows that Jesus and Lord, here standing (not, as in some instances, as an ordinary term of respect to a superior, but) for Jehovah, may be used indifferently of the same Person with propriety, and manifests, if not this man's persuasion, at least that of St. Mark, who would not have employed it, if he had thought there could be any danger in honouring his Master in the highest degree. This demoniac, restored to himself, became an undeniable witness to His power and mercy in that remote corner; and was probably the means of procuring to his Benefactor on His next visit a more favourable reception. (Mark vii. 31—37.) We have here two requests, which ought to be considered in connection with each other; that of the believer denied in wisdom, that of the ungodly granted in judgment. The keeping of swine had been forbidden, not by the Law, but by an Edict, a century before; and the fact can only be explained by there being here a large Gentile population, who used the flesh of that animal for food. The swine-herds, whether Jews or Gentiles, ought to have submitted to the Edict.

52. *Matthew's Entertainment; a Woman cured of an issue of blood; and the restoration to life of the Daughter of Jairus.* Matt. ix. 10—26. Mark v. 21—43. Luke viii. 40—56.

Matthew's entertainment of our Lord is placed by most Harmonists after His return from the country of the Gadarenes; and though in his own Gospel it immediately follows his call, his reason for introducing it there might be, that he wished to dismiss at once the mention of himself. Many of his former associates of his own profession were invited, in the hope no doubt that the same change that he had himself experienced, might be wrought in them through the edifying conversation of his Master. This scandalized the Pharisees; but Jesus vindicated Himself by replying, that it was the diseased that needed a physician, and that therefore He sought out sinners that He might reform them.

The disciples of the Baptist then came to express their surprise that He and His followers did not fast, like themselves and the Pharisees. He, adopting the image by which their master had described him, replied, that it would be unseasonable for the friends of a bridegroom to fast during the days allotted for the nuptials, which were always given to festivity; but, if any calamity tore Him from them, their joy would be turned into mourning, and then they would fast, as John's disciples did now. Thus he indirectly taught, that it would be unbecoming in them to fast while they were blessed with His presence; but that when He should be taken away from them, they would meet with hardships and trials that would render fasting seasonable. He further illustrated the subject by remarking, that no one could piece an old woollen garment with new cloth, which had never been fulled or properly dressed, (*ἄγναφος*, St. Mark,) because its rough and



unpliant texture, instead of supplying what was wanting, would rend it more; and that it was not usual to put new wine into old (leathern) bottles, going to decay, as the fermenting of the liquor would burst them. Thus in these occasional duties, which are not so much religion itself as means of promoting it, discretion should be used, and a due proportion observed between a believer's knowledge and stability of character, and the self-denial required from him; otherwise hopeful persons may either be disheartened by premature demands, or be led to rest in them as meritorious. Prudence and Tenderness are therefore necessary in recommending to new converts practices which, though useful, are not indispensable, and ought to be inculcated gradually as they are able to bear them.

As to Fasting, in particular, it is a matter of notoriety, that by many Roman Catholics it is little better than nominally observed, their abstinence generally respecting only the nature of the food taken; and among Protestants, at least among the English, although recognised as a duty by the National Church, it is in practice almost exploded. Its abuse by the Church from which we separated, has reduced it in our estimation; and as the edification of the individual is the object in view, it may perhaps be better that seasons for this duty should be chosen by himself, with a reference to his own constitution and circumstances, instead of being imposed at stated periods by Authority, except in such cases as call for national and public humiliation. Private Fasting, however, is taught by our Lord in a manner even more imperative than positive command; for He assumes that His disciples will fast, by instructing them how to perform the duty in an acceptable manner. And if we maintain that it is no longer binding, it will be difficult to defend the propriety of Private Prayer, concerning which He gives a similar caution, and which He only enforces in the same indirect manner.

Its utility for disciplining the body, and *bringing it into subjection* to the nobler part of our nature, is generally allowed by Moralists, and is expressly declared by St. Paul; (1 Cor. ix. 27.) and there is nothing in the present state of the Church or of the world to justify the conclusion, that this or other acts of self-denial are no longer needed for the mortification of sin, and the sinner's progress in holiness. But as men are too apt to run from one extreme to another, to pass from laxity to austerity, from inordinate indulgence to *neglecting of the body*; (Col. ii. 22.) they must be reminded of the same Apostle's assurance, that this is *a will worship* which has but *a show of wisdom*, and that he cautioned Timothy, (1 Tim. iv. 8.) who might be tempted in this way, (v. 23.) that *bodily exercise, ἀσκησις, asceticism, profiteth little*. Observing the evils of excess and defects, we shall regard Fasting, and other acts of self-denial, not as earning, but qualifying us for glory; not as our end, but as one of the means of attaining it.

Our Lord's discourse was interrupted by Jairus, a Ruler of a synagogue, who fell at His feet, intreating Him to come and heal his only daughter, a girl of twelve years old, who was dying. It was through Jewish elders, that the Centurion had solicited his servant's recovery, and we may reasonably conclude that this Jairus, who now applies for himself, was one of those whom he employed. Jesus complied with his request; but as He was going, a Woman with an issue of blood, who had reduced herself to poverty in the vain attempt to obtain a cure through men, who had only aggravated her disease, pressing through the crowd, touched the fringe of His mantle, and was cured. Her disease being one that was reckoned unclean, she was ashamed of naming it before the crowd; yet having formed a high though probably an erroneous conception of His dignity, she attempted to obtain from Him a cure even without His knowledge, and would not pollute Him by touching His Person. No miraculous

virtue, as she imagined, could have gone forth from Him without His consent, but He spoke to bring her to a public confession, which would at once make known His power and her faith; for the touch of Him on other occasions had produced this effect without His noticing it. Her feelings convinced her that she was cured, *ἔγνω τῷ σώματι*, (Mark v. 29.) and the instantaneous ceasing of an hæmorrhage, which had lasted twelve years, and baffled medical skill, was evidently miraculous. She would willingly have withdrawn unobserved, but Jesus for her sake determined, though it was painful to her, that she should acknowledge the obligation; He therefore not only spoke, but looked around; so, trembling she fell down, and declared in the presence of the multitude what she had done, and how she was cured. Eusebius (Hist. vii. 18.) informs us, that he had himself seen before her house at Paneas, statues of herself and of the Saviour: and we learn from Sozomen, (Hist. v. 21.) that the Christians removed the latter into their church, when Julian had substituted for it his own; and if this be correct, it is a proof that her false shame had been entirely subdued. Capernaum was the scene of the Miracle, but she might have come for the purpose, or afterwards settled at Paneas.

This delay put the faith of Jairus to the test, for before Jesus could reach the house, intelligence was brought of his child's death. His family would have had him retire in despair, but Jesus encouraged him with the assurance, that if he would believe, he need not fear the result. He sought, however, no unnecessary display, and therefore took with him only Peter and the sons of Zebedee, and her parents, excluding the family, and the hired mourners, who had now no business there, and whose incredulity rendered them unfit to be present. The girl was restored not only to life but to health, for she was able immediately to walk and to eat.

53. *Jesus restores Sight to two blind men; 54. and Speech to a dumb demoniac. Matt. ix. 27—35.*

The display of Christ's power was varied in almost every conceivable mode; but all His miracles were works of mercy, in which respect they are contradistinguished from those of Moses, most of which were judgments. The restoration of Sight to the Blind is one peculiar to Himself, and is predicted by Isaiah (xlii. 7.) as characteristic of the Messiah, for which reason, probably, so many of these obviously miraculous cures are recorded. The two blind men who met Him coming out of Jairus's house, besought Him as the Son of David, thereby acknowledging Him as the promised Saviour; and it is therefore probable, that they grounded their hope of His granting their petition as much upon prophecy, as upon the report of His miracles. Having already abundantly excited attention, He would not publicly grant their request; but on their following Him into the house, (probably Peter's,) He there, apart, drew from them a confession of their belief in His power, and rested their cure upon its reality: *Be it unto you according to your faith.* As that was genuine, their eyes were opened; and yet they disobeyed His strict injunction, not to make their recovery of sight known.

The cure, immediately after, of a dumb demoniac, shows the wilful blindness and inveterate malice of the Pharisees, who, when the multitude honestly exclaimed, *It was never so seen in Israel*, returned to their charge of confederacy with the evil Spirit.

55. *Jesus is again rejected at Nazareth. Matt. xiii. 54—58. Mark vi. 1—6.*

Jesus had commenced His ministry in Galilee, at Nazareth, where He had lived till the thirtieth year of His age. After a

series of miracles throughout the country, and after making many disciples, He now affords them another opportunity of acknowledging Him. Once more He taught there on the Sabbath; they were amazed, but no better effect was produced upon their minds than on His former visit; and though they did not now proceed to any act of violence, His low rank in society was a stumbling-block, which neither His wisdom nor the report of His miracles could remove. Such obstinate disbelief excited His astonishment, and no doubt His regret; for we are informed that He partook of all the feelings of the nature which He had assumed, which are compatible with perfect innocence. Their unbelief prevented His performing miracles, except a few cures, for it would prevent their bringing the sick to Him, and few of the sick themselves would have faith to be healed.

56, 57. *Jesus instructs and sends forth the twelve Apostles.*

*Matt. ix. 35—38. Mark vi. 7—11. Luke ix. 1—6.*

Multitudes flocked from distant places to hear Jesus; and their forlorn condition, as stray sheep without a shepherd to guide them, (for the Priests and Levites did not deserve that name,) excited His compassion. He observed, that there was a plenteous Harvest ripening, which would require many labourers to reap; and as they were so few, He exhorted them to pray the Lord of the harvest to increase their number. He followed out His remark, by sending out the Apostles over the holy land to proclaim His approaching reign; but on this occasion He strictly limited their mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, forbidding them to visit Samaritan, as well as Gentile, cities. His authorizing them to work miracles, is justly brought forward as evidence of His Divinity. God put His Spirit upon the seventy whom Moses appointed to assist him, but Moses conferred not

that Spirit; the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha, but the answer of the former showed that the power came not from himself, but from God. It is Christ alone that both works miracles at will, and authorizes others to perform them. The Apostles were sent out two and two; and it has been suggested, that it would be desirable to follow the example in the case of modern Missionaries, as the presence of a pious and wise companion would cheer a Christian among aliens and enemies, and in difficult cases might be of the greatest use, by advice, example, and encouragement. Some of the instructions given were of a temporary nature, only suited to the present journey, and were subsequently revoked. Thus He tells them that they had been sent without provision for their journey, but hereafter they must take with them what property they had; now their mission was limited to the house of Israel, hereafter the Gospel was to be preached to every creature. The warning, that, notwithstanding the power with which they were endued, and the joyful nature of the intelligence which they had to convey, they would be hated by all that were not prevailed upon to receive their message, and would be exposed to such sufferings and persecutions as would tempt them to apostatize, has been found more or less applicable in every age. He charged them therefore to beware of men, and to combine *Prudence* with *Innocence*. Still, after every justifiable precaution, they must expect no better treatment than He would Himself experience; but though they were condemned to death, they must not fear those who at the worst could but shorten life, but Him whose power extendeth over eternity. Him therefore they must confess before men, whatever it might cost, if they would have Him to acknowledge them, and to reward them in heaven. Nor would His enemies only endeavour to frighten them from their duty; there would be the well-meant opposition and the entreaty of friends to try them; but no

relative or personal regards must be suffered to interfere with love to Himself.

It is manifest, that here, and in other places, our Lord claims the supreme Love which the Law declares is due only to God; and this claim is to a thinking person, who can draw conclusions and weigh consequences, as strong evidence of His Divinity as a direct affirmation of it. No mere man can make such a claim without becoming the rival of his Creator, who *is a jealous God, and will not give His glory to another*; nor would one in his right mind think of advancing it. We should find it impossible to bring ourselves to feel the right of any human teacher, even though he sacrificed his life for us, to claim this supreme affection; and we must qualify and dilute his expressions, before we can bring them within the bounds of propriety, and free them from the charge of unexampled presumption. Yet the Apostles and primitive Christians felt the claim of Jesus to be just: and love to Him, which is the preeminent and distinguishing feature of Christianity, becomes, upon the orthodox scheme, both natural and reasonable. “View Jesus as Emmanuel, God with us, the atoning Redeemer of a lost world, and all is as it ought to be. The contemplation of what He is, and of what He hath done, will dispose us, with all the ardour of a grateful heart, to join in the song of heaven: *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*”. He concluded His address with the encouraging assurance, that persons who entertained them would be recompensed in the same manner as if they had welcomed Himself in person; that at any time, whoever should receive a prophet, that is, a teacher of religion, for the sake of his office, would receive the same reward as if he were a teacher himself; and that the gift of a cup of cold water, even the most inconsiderable

<sup>a</sup> Wardlaw, Discourses on the Socinian Controversy, p. 52—54.

service rendered to a private Christian, *because* he is a Christian, would not fail of a proportionable recompense.

*On Christian Missions.*

Our Lord's exhortation to His Apostles to pray for additional Labourers cannot now be read by the thoughtful Christian, without suggesting to his mind, how many countries, some of them not even known at that time to any, have, in the eighteen centuries that have since elapsed, been colonized by Christians, yet how many more still remain enveloped in the darkness and profligacy of heathenism; and those where the Apostles laboured, and founded churches, have been with few exceptions usurped by the false prophet Mahomet. As long, therefore, as the Harvest is plenteous, and the Labourers comparatively few, this command continues in force; and when we consider that the harvest is the standing crop ready for the sickle, which with due diligence may be gathered in, we perceive that it is not to an hopeless undertaking that our Lord's words direct our minds. Here is a vast and awful multitude of immortal souls no doubt in a most perilous condition, but still capable of salvation, supposing the appointed means to be used; and, according to His declaration, the difficulty lies, not in the nature of the work, but in the deficiency of workmen. He therefore points out our duty, which is, to pray to God to raise up and prosper labourers among the heathen, and to do our best by such means as are in our power to send them forth, and to support them; for, where we can do any thing for the attainment of a holy object, our prayer must be such a faithful one as simply hopes in God for the event, and also such an honest one as pledges us to all needful personal exertions. Labour without prayer would be infidelity; prayer without labour would be hypocrisy, and a pre-



sumptuous appeal to God, instead of a pious waiting upon His Providence\*. When we consider the facilities for communicating Christianity, which the press, learning, commerce, and peace, at the present day afford, there appears to be no age since the foundation of the Church to which this charge is so applicable as our own. The claims upon the charity of believers, of those who have no knowledge of our Lord, or who reject Him, begin at length to be acknowledged; and the immense Colonial Empire which it has pleased Divine Providence to bestow upon our Queen, making her the Sovereign of many more millions of Heathen than of Christian subjects, clearly points it out as the imperative duty of Britons to take the lead in the glorious office of converting the world, while it affords us means of influence, which no other nation enjoys, since our Missionaries, with few exceptions, preach to fellow subjects, and therefore, when unsuccessful, are safe at least from personal danger. While every denomination of Christians in our country is now earnestly labouring in this work, the Established Church is pursuing this grand object, by the agency of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign parts, which has hitherto confined its operations to the British dominions, and the Church Missionary Society, which has Western Africa and New Zealand for its peculiar province, but has no other limits than its opportunities assign it. The principle of encouraging Missions, which, strange as it may seem, though expressly commanded by the Saviour, has been ridiculed, and even argued against, by persons who would yet be affronted if they were classed with unbelievers, has of late years been formally recognised by our Sovereigns, who, in their capacity as Heads of the Church, have twice in our own days issued a Royal Letter, recommending the cause to every parish in England†.

\* Archdeacon Bather's Sermon before the Church Missionary Society, 1833.

† Some scruple to contribute to the Church Missionary Society, because they

Some urge, that since it has been ascertained that there are hundreds of thousands in our own Christian land as ignorant of Christianity as the heathen, it is our duty to endeavour to convert them, before we bestow our labour upon aliens. The objection is specious, but untenable; for had St. Paul acted upon this principle, he would have settled for life at Corinth or Rome, and not after laying the foundation, leave it to his converts to complete the superstructure. The fact is, that Societies have sprung up for strengthening the exertions of the Clergy at home, at the very time that others were promoting the conversion of the heathen, and both are generally supported by the same individuals. The zeal to advance the Faith in one direction, has not checked its extension in the other. Ours is a Missionary Religion; and we shall best fulfil our duty, by communicating the glad tidings of Salvation to the utmost of our power, abroad as well as at home. “For so long as *Teach all nations* shall stand in holy Scripture as a commandment, it will be our duty to endeavour to fulfil it, let what will be urged against it; and so long as *Lo! I am with you always*, shall stand there as a promise, nothing but infidelity can make us think at any time that our labour in such undertakings can be in vain in the Lord.”

think that it interferes with the more ancient one. Still this enjoys, though not so largely as the other, the patronage of our Bishops, and the great majority of the Ministers which it sends out have received Episcopal ordination. Others think, that there are advantages arising from having more than one set of Managers, and that it would not be desirable that the two Societies, if disposed, should condesce into one. There is at least the obvious advantage, that if we should have reason at any time to disapprove of the government of one, we have still the power of aiding the salvation of the heathen through the other. Many subscribe to the two, and they have the satisfaction of knowing, that the honour of converting 40,000 souls in the province of Tinnevelly, is to be shared by these Societies; and of learning from the Bishop of Madras, that the Missionaries of both labour together in the spirit of love, and a sound mind, and that India is deeply indebted to them. It is therefore to be hoped, that all the members of our Church will at least support one of these Societies.

59—61. *Herod, who had beheaded John the Baptist, is desirous of seeing Jesus. Matt. xiv. 1—13. Mark vi. 14—32. Luke ix. 1—10.*

The fame of one who wrought Miracles not only Himself, but also through the agency of twelve men whom He had commissioned, could not fail to spread over the country. Some supposed that He was Elijah, others that He was the prophet Jeremiah, whom they expected to return to life; but the guilty conscience of the Tetrarch suggested that He must be the Baptist risen from the grave, now endowed with this power. He expressed a desire to see this extraordinary Person, perhaps that he might imprison Him; but John's disciples, having buried their master, announced his death to Jesus, that He might consult His own safety; and He, His time being not yet come, withdrew (with His Apostles, who had returned from their mission) beyond the lake, to a desert near Bethsaida, within the tetrarchy of Philip. Herod had honoured the Baptist; he had listened with apparent satisfaction to his discourses, and done many things according to his advice; but when he remonstrated with him on his adulterous marriage with his niece and sister-in-law, he cast him, as has been observed, into prison at her suggestion, and was only restrained from putting him to death, by the fear of a popular disturbance. His birth-day, which he kept with great pomp, gave Herodias the opportunity which she sought of satisfying her revenge; and her plan for procuring the head of the prophet to be brought in a dish at the feast, seems to have been previously concerted with her daughter Salome, who must have been very young. Herod's regret for so rash a vow arose less, it should seem, from any wish to save John's life, than from the reproaches of conscience, or the fear of

consequences. He had been engaged in war with his father-in-law, who resented his conduct to his former wife; and it seems to have been his soldiers on their march whom the Baptist had enjoined to be content with their wages<sup>2</sup>. Soon after this murder, his whole army perished by treachery; and the loss was by the Jews considered as a divine judgment on him for his putting to death so good a man, who had taught the nation righteousness and piety<sup>3</sup>.

62, 63. *Five thousand are fed miraculously in the desert.*

*Matt.* xiv. 15—21. *Mark* vi. 32—44. *Luke* ix. 11—17.

*John* vi. 1—14.

The desert was not a solitude to Jesus, for crowds flocked to hear Him, probably in greater numbers because the pass-over was near, and they might intend to accompany Him to Jerusalem. Compassion induced Him to feed the whole number, amounting, without including women and children, to five thousand persons; and this He did by multiplying five barley-loaves and two small fishes, which a lad happened to have with him, to such an extent, that they not only satisfied these persons, who were almost starving from hunger, but the fragments so much exceeded the original quantity, as to fill twelve baskets. But first He set the example of returning thanks for our food. In the result was fulfilled that declaration of Scripture, *He that watereth, shall be watered also himself*. The disciples found that they were no losers by parting with their loaves and fishes; they had when they began but one loaf for each thousand men, yet after all were fed, the twelve had a basket apiece. Jesus, however, before He acted, determined, as upon other occasions, to put His disciples to the proof, and therefore addressed Himself to

<sup>2</sup> Conjectured because they are called not *στρατιῶται* but *στρατευόμενοι*.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph. Ant. xviii.

Philip, who had formerly announced Him to Nathaniel as Him of *Whom Moses and the Prophets did write*. But though that declaration seemed so promising, and Philip had since seen so many Miracles, he could not now recognise the Father in the Son, and thought only of purchasing, and named two hundred denarii, seemingly a greater sum than they possessed, as barely sufficient to buy a little food for them all. The only course that suggested itself to them was to dismiss them to the neighbouring villages, to provide for themselves. It is strange that they did not anticipate His meaning, recollecting how Elijah and Elisha had wrought a similar Miracle, though on a smaller scale. In computing the number fed, they do not speak by guess, for the disposition of the people in squares of a determinate length, enabled them to calculate with certainty. Jesus did not think it beneath Him to order His disciples to gather up the fragments. This was a convincing proof that there could have been no delusion; but the reason He assigns, *that nothing may be lost*, is eminently deserving of our attention; for as by feeding these thousands He sets us an example of liberality, so by this speech He teaches us, that frugality and charity should be united. Constitutional liberality borders upon prodigality, but Christian charity will be directed by the example and the precepts of Christ; and since *He to Whom the earth and the fulness thereof belongs*, is not lavishly wasteful of His property; so we, to whom He assigns only a portion of it as a trust, should be careful to expend our share in such a manner, as that in the due appropriation of it *nothing may be lost*. The effect of this Miracle was peculiar; it was the only one that drew from any considerable assembly of the Jewish people an acknowledgment of Him as the Messiah. Its similarity to the feeding of their fathers in the wilderness *by bread from heaven*, seems to have led them to the conclusion, that He was the Prophet like unto himself,

whom Moses had taught them to expect: they wished therefore to force Him to declare Himself, being satisfied, from His ability to feed thousands in the desert, that every obstacle must give way before Him; and conceiving too that He would not be unwilling to be constrained to assume His Sovereignty. So important in its consequences was this Miracle, that it is the only one recorded by all the Evangelists, and the last shews the supplementary character of His, by adding what is more imperfect to us, the Discourse which it occasioned.

64. *Jesus walks on the Sea.* *Matt.* xiv. 22—33. *Mark* vi. 45—53. *John* vi. 15—21.

As the Apostles might be disposed to concur in the design, Jesus constrained them to embark without Him; and then dismissing the crowd, instead of resting after His fatigue, withdrew to a mountain to pray. He had no sins to confess, and no wants to state; but knowing the future, He had before His view the temptations that awaited Him, and the work He had to accomplish. He had also the cause of His disciples and His Church to plead, and no doubt also delighted in communion with His Father.

Meantime the Apostles encountered a violent contrary wind; and though they had embarked in the evening, they had made not above three miles, when, about the dawn, three hours before sunrise, Jesus walked upon the lake to overtake them. At first they cried out from fear, supposing it to be an apparition; and He increased their alarm, by seeming as if He would pass them; but as soon as He addressed them, they took courage; and Peter, raised to a high degree of confidence by this second Miracle, sought permission to come to Him. His Master suffered him; and as long as his

faith was fixed upon His power, he was enabled to walk upon the waves; but the boisterous element soon drew off his attention to his apparent danger, his faith staggered, and he began to sink. Yet in his extremity he still relied upon Jesus, who stretched forth His hand in answer to his cry, and kept him up, rebuking him at the same time gently for his want of faith; not saying, Why didst thou come? but, Why didst thou distrust? They embarked, and the ship instantaneously, and therefore miraculously, “self-moving”<sup>b</sup>, without winds, or aid from oars,” reached the coast, not as was intended at Bethsaida, but at Capernaum. The Apostles; amazed beyond measure, seem to have been more impressed by this than by any preceding Miracle, for they worshipped Him in consequence, not merely as a superior, but as the Son of God, His right to which title He had so strikingly shewn, first by providing for so many *a table in the wilderness*; (Psalm lxxxviii. 26.) and now by treading upon the waves of the sea.

65. *The Discourse of Jesus, concerning eating His flesh and drinking His blood, which causes many of His disciples to leave Him, but elicits a confession of adherence to Him from Peter. John vi. 22—71.*

The next morning, the multitude, disappointed in His not returning to them from the mountain, came after Him in boats to Capernaum, where they expressed a natural surprise, as the wind was contrary, at His arrival before them. Instead of satisfying their curiosity, He blamed them for their motive in

<sup>b</sup> Thus expressed in the Paraphrase in hexameter verse of St. John's Gospel, by Nonnus, in the fifth century.

ἐπὶ θεοδινίῳ παλμῷ  
Οἶα νόσς πτερόσις, ἀνέμων δίχρα, νόσφον ἐρετμῶν  
Τελεπόροις λιμένεσσιν ὁμίλιν αὐτομάτῃ νηῦς.

seeking Him; which they did, not because His Miracles had convinced them that He was a Teacher of righteousness, but that they might make Him a king, in order to enjoy secular advantages. He exhorts them, instead of labouring for the perishable food of the body, to labour for that food of the soul, which lasteth for ever. Finding that faith in Him was the work that He required, and seeing that such doctrine had nothing congenial with their carnal expectations, their admiration began to die away, and suspicions to arise; and they asked what miracle He would work, that should induce them to believe in Him; what evidence He could show, to convince them that He could bestow upon them eternal life? He had *once* fed, they allowed, some thousands in a desert with ordinary food; but what was He in comparison with their lawgiver, who in a country as unproductive had fed in a miraculous manner the whole nation of their ancestors for *forty years with bread from heaven*? In reply, He took up the figure which they had introduced, and contrasted the manna of which they spoke with *the true bread from heaven, which giveth life to the world*. Lord, they exclaim, not perceiving His meaning, which was to draw them off from literal to spiritual feeding, from the food of the body to that of the soul, *evermore give us this bread*. He then plainly declared that He was speaking of Himself, and that though they deserted Him, He should not be left without disciples, for all whom His Father had given to Him would come unto Him, and He would reject none who came. None that seek salvation from Him need ever fear to be cast out; for it is His Father's will, that will to accomplish which He came down from heaven, that *whoever seeth the Son*, that is, contemplateth Him in all His offices, and *believeth in Him, shall have everlasting life*. He then showed the inferiority of the manna to the genuine living Bread, which is of such a nature, that he that feedeth upon it shall live for ever; and added, that *this Bread is His*



*flesh, which He will give for the life of the world.* At this statement they strove among themselves, saying, *How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?* Now it is remarkable, that upon this expression of their amazement, our Lord, instead of softening down His previous declaration, aggravated the difficulty which embarrassed them, by affirming in the most solemn manner, that except they ate the flesh of the Son of Man, and drank His blood, they had no life in them. That His declaration should appear harsh and incredible, is not surprising; for though *Instruction* had been spoken of as the food of the soul, no *Instructor* had yet called himself the Bread of life; and the notion of feeding upon Him must have been alike repulsive to their reason and their feelings. The language seems to favour the doctrine of an actual feeding on Him, and was so understood by the audience; for they said it was *a hard saying*; and we also might have taken the words literally, did not we know, from our Lord's subsequent explanation, that He was misunderstood. It is remarkable, that this meaning was not put upon it by the Fathers; and Augustine<sup>c</sup> expressly says, "that in these words Christ seems to command an heinous crime, or a flagitious deed. The passage, therefore, is a figure, enjoining us to communicate in the Passion of our Lord, and admonishing us to lay it up sweetly and usefully in our memory, because for us His flesh was crucified." "The disciples<sup>d</sup> themselves were hard, and not the saying; they received it foolishly, they thought it carnally." "Believe, and<sup>e</sup> thou hast eaten." "Whosoever believeth in Him, that person eateth<sup>f</sup>." Our Lord, finding this declaration to be a stumbling-block to His disciples, endeavoured to remove it by adding, *Doth this cause you to stumble? What then shall ye do, if ye shall see the Son*

<sup>c</sup> De Doctrina Christiana, iii. 15. 16.

<sup>d</sup> Augustin Enarratio in Ps. xcviii.

<sup>e</sup> Tract. xxv. in Evang. Joan.

<sup>f</sup> Tract. xxvi.

*of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* The latter part of the sentence declares this speech to be, like so many others, *figurative*; but the reason for the introduction of His Ascension does not appear so plain. The meaning of it, however, I conceive, is conveyed by Cranmer, who says, that “He so spake, that they should not phantasy that they should with their teeth eat Him here present in earth; for His flesh so eaten, saith He, should profit them nothing. And yet so should they not eat Him, for He would take His body away from them, and ascend with it into heaven; and there by faith, and not with teeth, they should spiritually eat Him, sitting at the right hand of the Father.” (Defence, vol. ii. p. 3.) The same meaning is suggested by Augustine. They thought He would deal out His own body to them, but He said, that He was about to ascend to heaven whole and entire<sup>f</sup>. The commemoration of Christ’s death had not yet been instituted, and allusion to it would have been at the time unintelligible; yet our Saviour addressed all ages, and as He spoke in this same Gospel of Baptism before its institution, we may assume that when He speaks of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, he means to speak of those who in faith partake of this Sacrament. I say in faith, for, to use Augustine’s<sup>g</sup> words incorporated into our 29th Article, “though the wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet they are in no wise partakers of Christ,” and so far are such from benefiting by the act, that, as we learn from the Apostle, those who do not discern in it the Lord’s Body, *eat and drink to themselves condemnation*. Our Lord speaks therefore, we may affirm, of the worthy communicant. But with

<sup>f</sup> Tract. xxvii. in Evang. Joan.

<sup>g</sup> Tract. in Evang. Joan. xxvi.

Waterland<sup>h</sup> I would maintain, that the universality of the language forbids our limiting it to sacramental feeding; for as this eating is declared to be indispensable to salvation, we must assume such a spiritual eating, as will comprehend not only all sincere Christians, who have never enjoyed the opportunity of communicating; but the patriarchs and other holy men, who lived before Christ's coming in the flesh, who, in the words of the Homily on Faith, "though not named Christians, yet was it a Christian faith they had, for they looked for all benefits of God the Father, through the merits of His Son, as we do now;" and the Apostle assures us, that *they did all eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink*. A careful examination of the discourse will remove the difficulty, for it will show that the strong metaphors of eating *the Flesh of the Son of Man*, and *the Bread from Heaven*, are equivalent to the simpler phrases of *coming to Him*, and *believing in Him*, and therefore, *whoever believeth in Him, hath eternal life*. At the same time, the metaphor guards the doctrine from abuse; for eating, involves the idea of the death of the person who is our food, and the belief intended, must not be a vague and general acquiescence in the precepts of the Gospel, but an influential belief in the efficacy of the Saviour's death as an atonement for sin, and a consequent partaking of the pardon it hath obtained, and of the grace of the Holy Spirit which it has purchased. According to Waterland, for the first four centuries, both in the Greek and Latin Church, this chapter was not *interpreted* of the Eucharist, but as the Eucharist was one way of participating of the Passion, it was sometimes *applied*, as it is by our Church, for explaining its nature, and exciting to a reception of it. This frequent applying of it came at length to make many interpret it directly so; and hence the practice, which arose in the beginning of the fifth century, of giving

<sup>h</sup> Vol. 4. Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist, chap. vi.

the elements to infants. Though the Romanists in general contend for the sacramental interpretation, many of them prefer the spiritual, influenced it may be both by the disuse of Infant Communion, and the denial of the cup to the Laity, neither of which can easily be vindicated upon the former. The Reformers in general, both our own and the foreign, reject this sense. Our Lord, as I have remarked, may allude to the future commemoration of His death, but to suppose that He will really give us His flesh to eat, and His blood to drink, is to substitute for a spiritual union with Him, a material feeding, which, were it possible to provide it, could only feed the body, without profiting the soul. Such is the error of the Roman Catholics, many of whom deduce from this discourse the dogma of the real corporal presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which is contrary to reason, and cannot be supported by the Scripture; and as our Lord speaks of dwelling in the believer, which has been always supposed to mean, not in person, but by His influence; so we conclude, that eating and drinking are not to be taken literally, but, as appears from the earlier part of the conversation, as equivalent to *coming to*, and *believing in*, Him<sup>1</sup>.

Many of His disciples forsook Him in consequence of this discourse, and He seems to have been left alone with the Twelve. He asked if they also wished to depart, intimating that He had no desire for reluctant followers. Peter, from the warmth of his disposition and his attachment, avowed, in the name of all, his full persuasion that Jesus was the Messiah,

<sup>1</sup> For a complete refutation of the Roman Catholic exposition, and the vindication of that of Saint Augustine, I must refer to Mr. Faber's *Christ's Discourse at Capernaum fatal to the doctrine of Transubstantiation, on the very principles of exposition adopted by the divines of the Roman Church*. In this argumentative and learned work, in which he supports his statement by a series of theological writers, from Tertullian to Elfric, a Saxon of the tenth century, he may be said to have exhausted the subject.

the Son of the living God; and His reply, *Thou hast the words of eternal life*, shows, that he understood his Master's spiritual interpretation of the meaning of His speech. Now when we consider that they were as yet ignorant both of the fundamental fact upon which the propriety of our Lord's language rests, the fact that He was to be the sacrifice to atone for sin, and likewise of the nature of the feast by a participation in which the benefits of that sacrifice were to be communicated to the faithful; it appears that nothing but faith in Him, the gift of His Father, could have secured their adherence. To this confession He only thought fit to reply, that one of them was a devil, *διάβολος*, that is, a false accuser, who would betray Him. As He did not name the traitor, the tendency of His speech was to check presumptuous self-confidence, and to lead them all to pray, that they might not enter into temptation.

## PART V.

66. *Jesus gives offence to the Pharisees by condemning their neglect of the Law of God, in order to keep their own Traditions. Matt. xv. 1—21. Mark vii. 1—23.*

OUR LORD appears, from prudence, not to have attended the Passover of this year; but the report of His miracles gave such uneasiness to the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, that some of them came down to Galilee in order to watch His conduct, and discover, if possible, matter of accusation against Him. Not finding that He and His disciples broke the Law, they objected to them their disregard of the Traditions. By this term, the Pharisees designated the precepts not recorded in the Pentateuch, which, they maintained, had been orally communicated in the mount by God to Moses, and had been handed down to them through successive generations. These, which exceed the former in bulk, and abound in minute instructions, have been since committed to writing, and have been declared by modern rabbies, who make them their principal study, to be lovely above the words of the Law<sup>a</sup>, which indeed they have virtually superseded. Jesus was asked why His disciples did not, according to one of these traditions, wash their hands before meals. Instead of answering their question, He accused them of hypocrisy, applying to them the words of Isaiah, *This nation honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.* He continued, that their enforcing human ordinances, as of divine authority, rendered their very worship vain and unprofitable; for they not only did

<sup>a</sup> This, and similar sayings, are cited by Whitby in his Commentary.

not themselves keep the commandments of God, but had explained them away, that they might observe their own traditions. To prove this serious charge, He shows how their interpretation annuls the fifth Commandment, which orders children to maintain their parents, if they need it, as well as to honour them. But according to those casuists, if a child should say to father or mother, *Whatever I have that might benefit thee is Corban*, that is, a gift to God, he was not only freed from the obligation of assisting them, but was actually prevented by this declaration, if he repented of his unnatural behaviour; and yet it appears that he was not bound (as would be the rational conclusion) to give to the Temple what he might have bestowed upon them, but might spend it in any other way. Thus, says Chrysostom, was a double evil committed; they did not bring it to God, and yet, as if that had been their intention, they deprived their parents of it, and obtained credit for piety. The extant writings of comparatively modern Jews prove that the same unhappy perversion of morality has survived their polity; for they go so far as to maintain, that "a man may be so bound by vows, that he cannot without great sin do what God hath in His Law required to be done, so that in such cases the vow must stand, and the law be abrogated."

Their exposition of this Commandment is only given as an example, for our Lord adds, *and many like things ye do*. This systematic perversion of morality which so strongly condemns, has accompanied Israel wherever the nation has been scattered. Tradition, here denounced so solemnly, was encouraged and enlarged by succeeding generations, till, from an authority equal to Scripture, it became superior, and superseded it, in the reverence and afflictions of the people. It must be known, that the Pentateuch not only

\* Pococke, Miscell. p. 415.

reveals, like the New Testament, the principles of duty to God and man, but is moreover a code of laws, for the regulation of personal, social, and political life. This code is carried out into the most minute details by the oral law, so called, because it is assumed, that it was communicated to Moses at the same time as the other, which he was instructed to write; but that this was only to be spoken secretly to those who were authorized to explain the former. It is said, accordingly, to have been transmitted through Ezra and the great Sanhedrim to the Rabbi Jehudah, who at last committed it to writing at the close of the second century, and is regarded by the whole nation as a Digest of all that an Israelite is required to believe and to do. It is called the Talmud, the Doctrine, that is, whatever a believer ought to learn, and is divided into two parts; the Text called Mishna, the Repetition, and the Commentary Gemara, that is, perfection, because pronounced to be a final authoritative complete explanation of the original Law. There are two Gemaras, that of Jerusalem, supposed to be a compilation of the third century, now comparatively disregarded; and that of Babylon, a work of the sixth, which abounds in absurd and often blasphemous fables. The Mishna, with a Latin translation, (Amsterdam, 1698,) fills six folio volumes; and the Hebrew text only of the Gemara of Babylon, (Berlin, 1715,) doubles the number! So voluminous a knowledge of which the prejudices of ages have rendered indispensable to the Rabbi, must engross the greater part of his time, and accordingly the study of the Bible with its Targums and Commentaries, is subordinate to that of the Talmud. Strange as it may seem to any one, however slightly acquainted with its contents, this compilation still retains its hold upon the Jewish mind; as appears from German Catechisms, recently published with a view of presenting modern Judaism in the most favourable light, in which it is plainly



stated, that these traditions, numerous as they are, contain no mere human ordinances, but are of equal authority with the Pentateuch. Our Saviour showed, that the Scribes of His time had virtually abrogated the fifth Commandment; the Rabbis, following in their steps, have made *the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy, and faith, of none effect by their tradition*, and by their casuistry have rendered probable the charge brought against their ancestors of hatred to all nations but their own. This remark may seem severe, but it is justified by the following quotations. He that sweareth to a Gentile, must pay the principal, but is not bound to add the fifth, because the Law (Lev. vi. 5.) prescribes this only if he lie to his neighbour, which he is not considered to be. To restore to an Israelite any thing he has lost, is a positive command; Thou shalt in any way bring it again to thy brother, but any thing that is lost belonging to a Gentile, (who is not a brother,) it is lawful to keep. We are apt to wonder how any pious Israelite cannot discover in Jesus the Messiah, as delineated in the Psalms and the Prophets; but not only have the most striking passages, which the Targums interpret as we of Him, been wrested to speak of others by the new School of Biblical criticism, which arose when the cruelty of the Crusaders had exasperated them; but the Old Testament itself was forsaken for the Talmud, which was more in harmony with their vitiated literary and moral taste.

Such is the unhappy effect of Tradition on the ancient people of God, and Christendom would have had reason to rejoice, if the Church of Rome, which still retains so large a portion of it under her dominion, taught by their example and her Lord's warning, had been a faithful "witness and keeper of holy writ." Her neglect, and afterwards studied disparagement of God's Word, affords a copious and melancholy comment on our Saviour's declaration. This *mystery*

*of iniquity* early began to work, but it would not have borne such bitter fruit so soon, had it not ripened under the favour of the reputed successors of St. Peter, who are mainly indebted to it for the unscriptural pretensions of their See. Its tendencies were noticed with alarm by pious Christians; and even Gregory the First, so superior to succeeding Popes, and I believe the best that was over that Church, when comparatively pure, A.D. 590—602, seems to have had a prophetic intimation of the evil to come, when he wrote to the arrogant Patriarch of Constantinople, that whoever assumed the title of Universal Bishop, doth in his elation forerun Antichrist. His successors, ignorant or heedless of what he had written, claimed to be the fountain of all ecclesiastical authority, visible monarchs of the Church, the Vicars, that is, the representatives and substitutes of Christ. Certainly by such titles which Gregory VII. Innocent III. and others, suffered not to be empty names, and by corresponding decrees, since he, the Supreme Pontiff, *as God, sitteth in the Temple of God*, decides what is true or false, right or wrong, because he doth proudly set himself before all others. Many eminent divines of learning and cool judgment, who can never be accused of enthusiasm or bigotry, maintain, that He is Antichrist in the worse sense of an Opponent; and certainly it cannot be denied, that any one, who calmly examines his system of Theology, must confess that the truths which it retains are lowered, and practically almost neutralised, by the errors with which they are adulterated. Thus it degrades, by sharing it with His Mother and the Saints as subordinate mediators, the intercessory office of our High Priest; and Purgatory itself deprives the wicked of the salutary fear of hell, and robs the believer of the hope of immediate blessedness, while the pardons and indulgences that flow from it presuppose the supererogatory merits of the Saints, which may be granted to make up the

deficiencies of less worthy members of the Church; and being sold, renders salvation easier to the rich than the poor, and grants them an earlier enjoyment of heaven. Nor is this adulteration of the truth the only charge we can substantiate; for we may justly accuse of antichristian doctrine a Church, which by her creed substitutes for an external imputed justification by Faith, an inherent justification by Holiness; for repentance, penance; for a commemoration of the Saviour's death by a Minister, His sacrifice by a Priest; for His spiritual presence in the hearts of the faithful, the actual presence of His body and blood, and even His divinity, under the appearance of a wafer. This specification of errors mixed with truth, and of errors substituted for it, may appear exaggerated to those who are unacquainted with the Protestant controversy; but those who have studied it know that the catalogue might be easily enlarged; and I believe that no Roman Catholic can deny that I have fairly stated their doctrines. An examination of them does not accord with the nature of this work; but our Church has not only protested against them, but has, from its Reformation to the present day, sent forth a succession of able champions, whose works fully justify her secession from Rome. Ridley and Cranmer, who led the way, were followed by Jewel, whose celebrated Apology and Defence may be regarded as stamped with authority. The two Archbishops, Laud and Usher, though heads of different Schools of Divinity, have both ably vindicated our common Faith, and showed that we could have "no peace with Rome, while Rome continued as it was." The conversion of James II. revived the controversy, which was carried on by learned writers, better known to us by other works, as Tillotson, Sherlock, and Stillingfleet; and from this storehouse of Tracts, collected together into two folios by Bishop Gibson, our divines may abundantly supply themselves with the best weapons for the support of Protestant Truth. Such doctrines could never

have been established, if the Scriptures had been as accessible as now to all ; but the system grew up by degrees, advancing from bad to worse, not I conceive, as has been plausibly argued, as a deliberate scheme of Priestcraft, though none could better promote that object than one that compels private confession to a priest, and teaches that he can, whenever he pleases, bring the Saviour down from His heavenly throne. Nevertheless, I believe Popery to be the natural produce of the human heart not under the influence of Grace, which contrives in different ways, and under different religions, to substitute form for substance, and to transfer religious duties as much as possible from a man's self, to his spiritual adviser. This has been happily illustrated in a variety of ways by the present Archbishop of Dublin, in his Bampton Lectures ; and I introduce from his later work of *Essays on Christianity*, (4th Series, p. 199,) a most appropriate observation “ The fact is, that in a great number of instances, (and by no means exclusively in questions connected with Religion,) the erroneous belief or practice has risen first, and the theory has been devised afterwards for its support. Into whatever opinions or conduct men are led by any human propensities, they seek to defend and justify these by the best arguments they can frame ; and then assigning as they often do in perfect sincerity these arguments as the cause of their adopting such notions, they misdirect the course of our inquiry, and thus the chance (however small it may be at any rate) of rectifying their errors is diminished ; for if these be in reality traceable to some deep-seated principle of our nature, as soon as ever one false foundation on which they have been placed is removed, another will be substituted ; as soon as one theory is proved untenable, a new one will be devised in its place.” This remark of the able and original Prelate, is strikingly illustrated in the conduct of the Roman Church. The errors which had grown up in dark ages,

when the Bible was, except to a few even of the learned, a sealed Book, were discovered to be errors, and some of the most injurious tendency, as soon as that volume of pure Truth was opened for the perusal of all. The attempt to support them by far-fetched allegorising interpretations, was soon found to be hopeless, and therefore recourse was had to a new standard Tradition, which not merely Roman divines, like Bellarmine or Bossuet, whose authority may be disclaimed if convenient, but the Church itself, in Council assembled, has solemnly acknowledged as the unwritten Word of God, and declares that she “receives and venerates that and all the books (including the Apocrypha) of the Bible with sentiments of equal piety and reverence.” Such is the Trent Decree, which Roman Catholics acknowledge, is, upon their principles, infallible; for though their divines differ as to the seat of Infallibility, some placing it in a Council, and others in a Pope; they cannot consistently object to any dogma decreed by the first, and ratified by the second, in his Creed; which every ordained Priest swears that he will hold and preach.

Tradition, the assumed equal of Scripture, first appears as the interpreter of it, and so brings it under *tutelage*, which is soon converted into *vassalage*. For since the comment claims the same divine origin as the text itself, it has in fact a superior authority; since though in theory it is only equal to Scripture, in practice it becomes paramount. It is only by lowering the importance of Scripture, that Tradition can be thus exalted, and here the infidel and papist meet in attempts to show, that it is so perplexed and ambiguous, that in many places it is unintelligible, (to use the words of Cardinal Bellarmine,) unless explained by some infallible authority. The Scripture bears testimony to itself, that *it is a lantern to our feet*; and the writer of the 119th Psalm exclaims, *I have more understanding than my teachers, I am wiser than the aged; for Thy testimonies are my study, and*

*because I keep Thy commandments.* The affirmation is borne out by reason ; for surely, if God deigned to inspire man to record His will, He would take care that they should be guided into all necessary religious and moral truth ; and what we might expect, has been in every age confirmed by the experience of multitudes of moderate abilities and limited education. Interpretation, however, is the least important claim of Tradition. On many of the Articles on which Rome insists, Scripture is wholly silent, and therefore it calls in to its aid Tradition as an independent source of knowledge. To assert that the written word of God contains whatever He requires His rational creatures to know, might appear to one who had never read ecclesiastical history a truism, too obvious to need to be repeated ; and yet the three great divisions of mankind, the religions of two of which are based upon a real, and the third upon a presumed, Revelation, the Jew, the Christian, and the Mahometan, are so little satisfied with the Bible or the Koran, that they virtually concede that they are incomplete, by adding to them Traditions. But here both have the advantage of us. The former appeals to his Talmud, the latter to the written sayings of his Prophet, traced up through well-known names to those to whom they were spoken, while there is no authorized collection of Christian Traditions, and the believer who expects to find the Church of Rome an infallible guide, whose decision shall put “an end to controversies,” will soon discover his mistake. The first of the twelve Articles which Pius IV. attached to the Nicene Creed, A. D. 1564, “admits and embraces Apostolical Traditions,” but he must seek for them himself in the decrees of Councils, and in the voluminous writings of the Fathers, that is, of all the ecclesiastical authors, with a few exceptions, from the Apostolical age to the fifth century, and lower at least, from Clement of Rome, to Jerome and Augustine. But Tradition, when thus painfully collected, is not found to answer the pur-

pose for which it is brought forward. The earlier Fathers, like the Bible, are silent upon the peculiar doctrines of Rome; and the later, whatever may be their merits as commentators, never profess to know more than they collect from the New Testament of the doctrines of our Saviour and His Apostles. Indeed, the early ones in their disputes with the Gnostics appeal in the manner of Protestants, to the written word, as containing the whole of the religious knowledge which it had pleased God to reveal. And we should remember too, that these truths are not announced in single passages, upon the meaning of which Critics might dispute, but are presented to the reader again and again in various forms. When we consider how natural it is to treasure up whatever we can remember of the conversation of those whom we love and admire, and especially if they have exercised any influence upon mankind, and that many who listened to the discourses of the Saviour and His Apostles were able to record them, it is wonderful that Tradition has so little to tell of them, whether true or false. Excluding the forged Gospels and Acts which confute themselves, I am not aware of any sayings assigned to the Apostles, and the two or three very short ones recorded of their Master are of no doctrinal importance. Rome shifted the foundation of her creed from Scripture to Tradition, when the former failed her; but the same spirit of investigation which deprived her of the first, soon showed the insufficiency of the second. The four great doctors of the Church, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine, who are made to support the papal Chair, never heard of the Pontiff's most pernicious tenets; they are even later than the first Gregory. "Traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found;" and it may be proved of the peculiar tenets of Rome, that they were either "brought in in such an age after Christ, or in such an age were not in;" and yet the Council of Trent

repeatedly declares, that the doctrines which it defines were invariably held by the Catholic Church from the beginning. Jewel, on the contrary, maintained, that the doctrines which Rome propounded as ancient, were modern innovations; and his Apology may be regarded as the accredited vindication of our own Reformed branch of it, since it was approved by four successive Archbishops of Canterbury, and Queen Elizabeth ordered a copy of it to be kept for reading in every parish church.

Thus, not in a Latin treatise, which would be accessible only to a comparatively learned few, but in a Sermon in our own tongue, intelligible to all, and preached at Paul's Cross in 1560, he invited discussion. "Here the matter itself that I have now in hand putteth me in remembrance of certain things that I uttered unto you, to the same purpose at my last being in this place. I remember I laid out then here before you a number of things that are now in controversy, whereunto our adversaries will not yield. And I said, perhaps boldly, as I might then seem to some man, but as I myself, and the learned of our adversaries themselves do well know, sincerely and truly, that none of all of them, that this day stand against us, are able, or shall ever be able, to prove against us any one of all those points, either by the Scriptures, or by example of the Primitive Church, or by the old Doctors, or by the ancient General Councils.—My promise was, and that openly before you all, that if any man were able to prove the contrary, I would yield and subscribe to him, and he should depart with the victory.—The words that I then spake, as near as I can call them to mind, were these. If any learned man of all our adversaries, or if all the learned men that be alive, be able to bring any one sufficient sentence out of any old Catholic Doctor or Father, or out of any old General Council, or out of the Holy Scriptures of God, or any one example of the Primitive



Church, whereby it may be clearly and plainly proved that there was any private Mass in the whole world at that time for the space of six hundred years after Christ, or that there was then any Communion ministered unto the people under one kind, or that the people had their common prayers then in a strange tongue that they understood not, or that the Bishop of Rome was then called an universal Bishop, or the head of the universal Church, or that the people was then taught to believe that Christ's body is really, substantially, corporally, carnally, or naturally in the Sacrament, or that His body is or may be in a thousand places or more at one time, or that the priest did then hold up the Sacrament over His head, or that the people did then fall down and worship it with godly honour, or that the Sacrament was there, or ought now to be hanged up under a canopie, or that in the Sacrament after the words of consecration there remaineth only the accidents and shows, without the substance of bread and wine, or that the priest then divided the Sacrament in three parts, and afterwards received himself all alone, or that whosoever had said the Sacrament is a figure, a pledge, a token, or a remembrance of Christ's body, had therefore been judged for an heretic, or that it was lawful then to have xxx, xx, xv, or v, Masses said in one Church, in one day, or that images were then set up in the Churches to the intent the people might worship them, or that the lay people was then forbidden to read the Word of God in their own tongue:—if any man alive were able to prove any of these articles by any one clear or plain cause or sentence, either of the Scriptures, or of the old Doctors, or of any old General Council, or by any example of the Primitive Church, I promised then that I would give over and subscribe unto him." The Bishop proceeds in the same strain, " Besides all that I have said already, I will say further, and yet nothing so much as might be said." He then specifies some

other innovations, concluding with these words; "These be the highest mysteries and greatest keies of their religion, and without them their doctrine can never be maintained and stand upright. If any one of all our adversaries be able to avow any one of all these articles, by any such sufficient authority of Scriptures, Doctors, or Councils, as I have required, as I said before, so say I now again, I am content to yield unto him, and to subscribe. But I am well assured, that they shall never be able truly to allege one sentence. And because I know it, therefore I speak it, lest ye haply should be deceived." None, however, has, for nearly three centuries, put forth an adequate confutation of this challenge of the champion of our faith. And the Irish Jesuit, who dared any Protestant to allege a text, that condemned some of their leading tenets, was answered by Primate Usher, whose Reply fully justified his assertion, that "the novelty of the new Romish doctrine was therein plainly discovered."

As the study of Ecclesiastical Antiquity advanced, the Romanists found that Tradition, even in all the latitude with which they take it, could no more than Scripture sustain the superstructure of *hay and stubble* which they had raised. Hence the ingenuity of some of their German divines, as dissatisfied with the Fathers, as their predecessors had been with Scripture, attempted to lay a new foundation, in what has acquired in our country the name of developement. The bud which is now unfolding, was first formed at the Council of Trent, which though it had fixed the Bible and Tradition, or, as they called it, the written and unwritten word, as the only rules of faith, found it necessary, in such cases as Indulgences and Image worship, to introduce as a third rule its own authority. Thus on the Invocation of the Saints, and the Worship of their relics, no attempt is made to press Scripture into the service of the Synod, for the members of it were conscious that Scripture was against them; even Tradition

appears to be abandoned, at least Apostolical Tradition, for appeal is made only to the practice of the Apostolical Church. The sciences which teach us the properties of Nature, that is, of the works of God, are human discoveries, and are gradually improved by the observations and experiments of successive generations, but Theology is a Revelation. It may be better understood, as the volume in which it is contained is more carefully and judiciously studied; but it can never be improved, being in its nature perfect and unalterable. Overlooking this essential and obvious difference, between divine and human knowledge, these theorists assume, that because we are better natural philosophers than our ancestors, Christianity was more developed in the age of the Fathers than in that of the Apostles, and was in a still more perfect state in that of the Schoolmen. This developement may answer their purpose for a season; but it is a dangerous weapon, which may recoil upon those who introduced it; for if the Romanist, by this device, improves Christianity into the deification of the Virgin, how can he prevent the Anti-Trinitarian from using it in an opposite direction, till he has established, as he imagines, the simple humanity of our Lord? The Protestants however, from this concession, may deduce a new argument against Rome; for if they allow, what we have always maintained, that Rome was Catholic long before it was Papal, and that the Papacy was not developed for centuries; upon what principle can they show that it was intended that there should ever be an universal Governor of the Church, who had never been thought of in that age, in which Christianity is allowed by all to have been exhibited in its original purity? I leave the Romanist to reconcile, if he can, the four orthodox and general Councils, with the European and heretical Councils of Florence, the Lateran, Palace, and Trent, Popes with Popes, and the Fathers of one age with the Fathers of another; or if he prefer to follow these new

teachers, into whatever system of superstition or infidelity developement may carry them along, satisfied the more, the longer I study the subject, with Chillingworth<sup>d</sup>, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon the rock of Scripture; and adopting his memorable conclusion, "The Bible, I say the Bible, is the only religion of Protestants. Whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion; but as matter of faith, and of religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds, believe it themselves, or require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption." Not that I would abuse, as some have done, the privilege of private judgment, and steer without chart or compass, when the Church, in which I was baptized and bred, has drawn out of this source of Truth *a form of sound words*, which she does not, like Rome, the self-styled "Mistress of all Churches," command us under the penalty of curses to profess, but as a "Mother" invites us to accept. Renouncing power, rejecting Tradition, and seeking not forbidding enquiry, she maintains, though he hath expressed it in other words, what Chillingworth hath borrowed from her sixth Article, that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

Romanists plead in favour of Tradition, the insufficiency as well as the obscurity of Scripture; but the same arguments equally vindicate both; and our opponents may be confuted from reasoning, experience, and authority. I dwell not upon the many reasons that might be urged; for if God be the Author, the contents of the Bible must be truth without any

<sup>d</sup> Works, ii. p. 410. Charity maintained.

alloy of error, and all the truth that it is indispensable to know. The Articles of our Church answer the demand of experience. The only fault that the orthodox have found with them is, that they err from excess, not from deficiency; but though some may think that they have stated propositions that were not wanted, all agree that they have stated none that are false, and have omitted no essential tenets. Scripture proofs have been found for them all, and divines of different schools have substantially agreed in the interpretation of them. Experience proves that the Bible satisfies the claims of the acutest and most profound intellect; and, while it enlightens the understanding, sanctifies the heart, if read as it ought to be with diligent study and prayer. Our Lord's condemnation of Jewish Tradition is at least as unfavourable to Christian; and He appeals to the Law and to the Prophets as a sufficient guide. In fuller terms does His Apostle Paul declare of that smaller and obscurer portion of God's revealed Will, which Timothy had *known from infancy*<sup>t</sup>, that it was *able to make* the private Christian *wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*. And after enumerating its properties, as teaching, reproof, correcting, and instructing in righteousness, he pronounces that it will perfectly educate the Christian Minister. These words, *worthy of all acceptation*, are acknowledged to be themselves Scripture by St. Peter, (2 Pet. iii. 16.) and if we have not the same attestation to the other books of the New Testament, it is only because there were no other surviving believers who could put to them the seal of inspiration.

These remarks upon the nature and authority of Tradition, have necessarily alluded mainly to articles of Faith, and only indirectly show that it is subversive also of Morality. However, I cannot dismiss the subject without stating, that Roman Catholic Casuists, like these Pharisees,

<sup>t</sup> Ἐκ τῆς βρεφείας, rendered *childhood* in A. T.

and at least in an equal degree, *transgress the Commandment of God by their Tradition*. My space does not admit of proofs in detail. Were it my object to unveil that Mystery of Iniquity, the Ethics of Rome, it would be easy to fill volumes; and to substantiate the charge of recommending crimes, and palliating sins, even such as cannot be named among Christians, by reference to admired Doctors of their Communion, who seem to have vied with one another in showing, from what they deem competent authority, to what a depth of wickedness a man may deliberately descend, without risking his salvation. Decency forbids a full exposure of these abominations, and few would choose to pollute their minds by a perusal of any of the bulky works prepared for the guidance of priests, who are condemned to meditate on such topics by the practice of auricular confession, that awful prolific source of corruption, both to penitent and confessor. My own knowledge is wholly obtained from the “*Provinciales*” of the Jansenist Pascal<sup>g</sup>, that masterpiece of wit and literature of a

g As Romanism, in too many instances, renders the word of God of none effect by Tradition, so the Jesuits have gone much farther; and in order to recommend themselves as Confessors, have annihilated Morality by their specious doctrine of Probability, so fully exposed by Pascal. I must refer to his Letters for the proof of this fact, which, except he had quoted the very words of their Casuists, could not fail to appear to be a calumny, citing only the indignant language in which he closes his conversation with the Jesuit, and briefly stating, what most of my readers are I suppose ignorant of, the meaning of *Probability*. “Was it not enough to have allowed to men so many forbidden things, by the palliations which you have introduced, must you also give them opportunity to commit the very crimes which you have not been able to excuse, by facility and assurance of absolution, in destroying for this purpose the power of priests, and obliging them to absolve rather as slaves, than judges, even the most inveterate sinners without any change of life, without any sign of regret, except promises broken a hundred times, without penance, if they will not accept it, and without quitting situations in which they are exposed to the danger of sinning, if they should find it inconvenient. But you proceed still further, and the liberty you have taken of shaking the most sacred rules of Christian conduct, extends even to the overthrow of the law of God. You attack piety in the heart, you take from it the spirit that gives it life; you say that the love of God is not necessary to salvation, you even assert that dispensation from this love is

pious genius, alike unequalled in science and eloquence, who has consigned to infamy the morality of the Jesuits, as long as the language of France shall be understood. It is urged in favour of the Order, not that these treatises on Morals have not been faithfully cited, but that it is not responsible for the opinions of individual members. The remark, though plausible, will have little weight with those who know how this Society, which was founded to withstand the Reformation, in addition to the Monastic triple vow, is pledged to implicit obedience to the Pope; and that from other sources the very name of Jesuit conveys to the honest Romanist as much as to a Protestant, the idea of a dissembler, who can make vice pass for virtue, and maintains that a good end justifies assassination<sup>b</sup>, or any other flagitious means. We learn from the

the benefit which Jesus Christ has brought into the world! Before the Incarnation, one was obliged to love God; but since *God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son*, the world redeemed by Him is discharged from this obligation. Strange theology of our days! You remove the anathema which St. Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) pronounced upon all who love not the Lord Jesus Christ." Letter x. "Probability is the foundation and a, b, c, of our morality. An opinion is probable which is formed upon reasons of weight, and even a single Doctor can sometimes render an opinion probable, for a person devoted to one study would not have embraced an opinion unless drawn to it by a good and sufficient reason. There are few questions on which you will not find that one Doctor speaks in the affirmative, another in the negative. The enquirer consequently chooses the opinion that is most agreeable to himself, and the Confessor, though the opinion may not appear to him or even to the penitent probable, is bound, under the penalty of committing a mortal sin, to absolve him." Letter v.

<sup>b</sup> Both Henry III. of France, and his successor Henry IV. fell by the daggers of two fanatics, who had been educated by the Jesuits, and gloried in the act as pleasing to God. Sixteen years after, Sanctarellus, one of the Order, published at Rome 1626, with the approbation of the General, his *Tractatus de Hæresi*, in which he maintains, that the Pope, because he hath supreme power, may depose Sovereigns for any crime, and even for insufficiency, *sed etiam propter sufficientiam*, and after admonition punish them by death. After the murder of Henry IV. the Doctors of the Sorbonne stated to the Parliament of Paris, that the works of Jesuits were circulated full of the doctrine, that those whom they called tyrants, may be lawfully killed. The ablest of these is the *Tract De Rege*, of Mariana, the celebrated Historian of Spain, who derives the power of Kings from the People. He discusses at length the question, whether it be lawful to put to death a tyrant. He writes, "Henry III. lies slain by the hand of a monk

Canonists that Popes are above and beyond the law; and certainly they have the power of condemning works of an immoral as well as of an heretical character. But so far have they been from taking upon themselves this office, that they have sanctioned the violation of duty both in private and public life. Plenary absolution and the sale of dispensations not only from oaths and vows, but even for the commission of crimes, facts too notorious to be denied, originate in doctrines which no ingenuity could have wrested out of the written word. The punishment of presumed heresy by death, whether by open violence as inflicted on the Albigenes under the direction of St. Dominic, or as reduced to system by the Inquisition, is a dogma which has never been retracted; and Gregory XIII. may be said to have gloried in his shame, when he caused the massacre of St. Bartholomew to be commemorated in painting on the walls of the Vatican<sup>i</sup>, and struck a medal in honour of that slaughter of the Huguenots<sup>k</sup>. Their Bulls anathematising and deposing Sove-

nobile monumentum, insignem, animi confidentiam, facinus memorabile," by which Princes may be taught, that impious darings do not occur with impunity, for he was preparing to leave his kingdom to Henry, who had been infected with bad opinions on religion from his tender years, and therefore devoted to Hell by the Roman Pontiff, and deprived of the right of succession. A synopsis of the Book may be seen in Sharon Turner's History of Elizabeth, chapter xxxi. the result of which is, that any man may kill a tyrant. But who we may ask of acknowledged Sovereigns comes under that description? The Council of Constance, he admits, censures the doctrine, that a tyrant may be slain by treachery as well as by violence; but as this sentence was not approved by Eugenius IV. and his successors, he pays no respect to it. He allows however that it is braver to rush openly upon a tyrant, but the prudent will make use of fraud and ambush.

<sup>i</sup> They were painted by Vasari, the author of the Lives of the Painters; but though time has faded them more than the Frescos of Raffaele, about half a century earlier, they are still discernible on the walls of the Sala Regia, the scene of the magnificent banquets of Leo X. But since with the Reformation luxury and pleasure disappeared from the Papal court, it has only since been used for procession from the Sistine to the Paoline Chapels, at the two extremities.

<sup>k</sup> The authenticity of this medal, marked with the legend *Hugonottorum Strages*, which are occasionally seen, has been denied by liberal Roman



reigns, from the Emperor Henry IV. to our Queen Elizabeth, and Henry IV. King of France, A.D. 1076—1585, must be known to every reader of History ; and Bellarmine informs us, that such may be murdered by their subjects or whatsoever others without guilt. Pius V. in excommunicating Elizabeth, and all who adhered to her, expressly absolves her subjects from their allegiance ; and the preamble of his Bull, in which he claims the right of plucking up and of pulling down, as well as of planting and of building, affords a singular contrast to the reproof of Him whose Representative he assumes to be ; *The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them*. Some tell us, that the Popes of a more liberal age, though they cannot in consequence of their claim to infallibility annul the decrees of their predecessors, yet silently reject them ; but as if to show how little foundation there is for this charitable conclusion, and that Rome is ever the same, after an interval of nearly a century and a half, when indignation against the Reformation might be supposed to have subsided, it pleased Clement XI. to select out of the long catalogue this Pope for an object of worship, and to place the faithful under the protection of this new saint, whom God, we are told in the Collect for his day, has vouchsafed to choose, both to restore divine service, and to *crush* the enemies of the Church<sup>1</sup>.

Catholics, who were imperfectly acquainted with the history and claims of their Pontiffs, but an engraving of it may be seen in the *Numismata Pontificum Romanorum*, by the Jesuit Bonanni, Romæ 1699, tom. ii. p. 336. and so far is he from wishing to soften down this massacre, which he himself calls *lanienam horribilem*, that he informs us that the Pope wrote to Charles IX. characterised by this author as a boy of generous disposition, that he should proceed with resolution, and not by mixing milder measures, ruin a cause so prosperously begun with sharp remedies. He adds, that in order to show that the slaughter was not perpetrated without God's aid and the Divine counsel, Gregory struck on the reverse an Angel, who rushes armed with a sword and a cross, on the rebels.

<sup>1</sup> *Ad conterendos Ecclesiæ tuæ hostes* is correctly rendered *crush* in the translation of this Collect, in the Ordinary of the Mass, published by Coghlan, London

Such observations as these, which might have been greatly extended, show the consequences, both under the Jewish and Christian Dispensations, of any departure from the written word which God has provided for the guidance of individuals and communities, and ought to excite our gratitude for His Providential care, which has raised up for us such a bulwark of divine truth, against errors of faith and practice in a reformed Church, which so decidedly maintains the supremacy of Scripture.

Jesus then called the people to Him, and said, *Hearken unto Me every one of you, and understand*; and told them in plain terms, that a man was defiled not by what entered into the mouth, but by what came out of it, that is, by evil thoughts, which produce wicked actions. Peter afterwards, in private, asked Him the meaning of this saying, and He told him that he spake of words which betray the thoughts and desires that prevail within. We are surprised at his dulness, but we forget, that the explanation, which has been familiar to us from childhood, was then new; and that the Jews, who rested satisfied in the performance of outward ablutions, had no conception that they were appointed only to remind them of the importance of inward purity.

67. *Jesus retires to the extremity of the Holy Land, where He rewards the faith of a Woman of Canaan, who would take no denial, by curing her daughter. Matt. xv. 21—28. Mark vii. 21—30.*

After this offence publicly given to the Pharisees, Jesus retired to the most remote northern extremity of the land, on

1799; but softened down (as has been already observed of "*impera*" in a hymn addressed to the Virgin) to *depress* in the Roman Missal, for the use of the Laity. Keating, London 1815.

the confines of Tyre and Sidon, the population of which was chiefly Gentile, where, if His enemies were disposed to follow Him, He might place Himself under Philip's protection. He entered into an house, with the intention of being unknown, but could not remain so, for His fame, as a miraculous Healer of diseases, had reached Syria before Him. But now He seemed to refuse to act; for in vain a woman, descended from the ancient Canaanites, besought Him to deliver her daughter from demoniacal possession. She is also called a Greek, that is, an idolater, which, by owning herself to be justly treated as a dog, she appears to have still been, although she addressed Jesus as the Son of David; a title she might have used without an adequate conception of its meaning. He heard her in silence, with apparent indifference yet real kindness, intending thereby to prove and manifest the strength of her faith. The Apostles, pitying her distress, or wearied with her importunity, requested Him to grant her petition; but He replied, in her hearing, that He was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. This speech was so far from offending or discouraging her, that she pleaded the more earnestly, throwing herself at His feet; but He repelled her in still harsher terms, telling her in figurative language that it was not meet to bestow upon the heathen the cures intended for the Jews. Still she persevered, and instead of disdaining His comparison of her to a dog, and leaving Him in indignation, she meekly submitted to the mortifying distinction, which by a happy ingenuity she even turned into an argument for His granting her petition. She said in effect, I allow that we heathen are no better than dogs in comparison of Thy children the Jews, yet as such, notwithstanding our inferiority, we are still a part of Thy household: and as the dogs eat of the fragments of a plentiful table, without any detriment to the children, so Thy power is so great, that Thou canst heal

my daughter without any diminution of the blessings reserved for Israel. Our Lord's purpose being now answered, He granted her request, in language which, while it commanded and encouraged perseverance, conveyed reproof to many Israelites. *Great is thy faith, be it unto thee as thou wilt.* Like Jacob, she wrestled with God in prayer, and prevailed; and thus learnt, and has taught others, *to pray* and not *to faint*, and that God will be found in the end a *Hearer of prayer*, though *He may bear long with His elect.*

68. *Jesus returns through Decapolis, and cures a Deaf man, who had also an impediment in his speech. Mark vii. 31—37.*

The notoriety of the miracle, which had been conceded to the importunity of maternal affection, interfered with His desire of privacy, and seems to have been the cause of His returning immediately homeward through Decapolis, the district in which the dispossessed demoniac of the tombs had declared by His orders the great things that He had done for him. It is probable that the different reception which Jesus now found was owing to his report; for then they besought Him to leave them, now they brought to Him to be cured the diseased, the blind, and the lame. The case is specified of a deaf man with an impediment in his speech. Taking him aside out of the crowd, He restored him to the perfect use of both senses, but did not, as in other instances, signify His intentions by words, which a deaf man could not have understood, but by an application to the defective organs. At the same time He looked up to Heaven, to direct him to the Giver of speech and hearing, saying, *Be opened*, and sighed, probably at the amount of misery which it was incompatible with the scheme of the moral government of the world for Him to relieve. In this district there were no

Pharisees to pervert and mislead, and therefore the spectators gave way to the feelings of astonishment and admiration, that such an exhibition of power and benevolence was calculated to call forth. *He hath done all things well, He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.*

69. *Jesus feeds Four thousand men, besides women and children, with seven loaves and a few small fishes. Matt. xv. 29—39. Mark viii. 1—9.*

In this retired neighbourhood the multitude resorted to Jesus, and stayed till the third day, so that they must have passed two nights in the open air, such was their earnestness to hear Him. The necessity of supplying them with food, lest they should faint on their return, occasioned His working in their favour a miracle similar to the one already performed on or near the same spot. The persons, however, were not the same, and seem to have been chiefly heathen, who had followed Him from the borders of Tyre and Sidon, because it is said that *they glorified the God of Israel*, for the variety of miracles which He wrought on those they brought to Him. In the former instance the men fed, exclusive of women and children, were five thousand, and the baskets filled with fragments, twelve; in the present, when the provisions were somewhat greater, the men were four thousand, and the baskets seven; the former answering to the number of those who fed them, in this to that of the loaves. Our translators have used *Basket* in both places, but the original has two different words, which our Lord retains in His reference to them afterwards, *Κόφινος* and *Σπυρίς*, rendered in the Vulgate by *Cophinus* and *Sporta*. The latter, which occurs here, must be the largest, for in one of them St. Paul was let down along the wall at Damascus; (Acts ix. 33.) and it appears from Juvenal, (iii. 14.) that it was

the practice of the Jews to carry about with them the former. In both instances Jesus gave thanks, teaching thereby His followers to acknowledge the bounty of their heavenly Father in His provision for their daily maintenance, and, according to the Jewish custom, separately for the bread and fishes, as He did for both bread and wine on the more solemn occasion of instituting the commemoration of His death. Jesus, as before working the former miracle, puts their faith to the test, by enquiring what was to be done; and it is strange that their recollection did not suggest an answer. That had been indeed wrought in favour of their own countrymen; the present assembly were chiefly heathen; yet this will hardly explain their dulness, since He had cured so lately the daughter of the woman of Canaan.

70. *The Pharisees and Sadducees again seek a Sign from Heaven. Matt. xvi. 1—4.*

No two classes of men could be more opposite to each other, in principle and conduct, than the Pharisees and Sadducees; yet enmity to holiness, common to both, united them to tempt Christ. They again desire Him to show them a sign from Heaven; and He again declared that no sign should be given them except that of the prophet Jonah; but He first addressed them as hypocrites, for they could conjecture, from their observations upon the sky, the changes in the weather, and night, if they had been so inclined, have discerned as readily the signs of the times. The sceptre was departing from Judah, for a part of the country was already a Roman province, the rest but nominally independent: Daniel's seventy weeks drew towards a close; the Baptist had appeared as the predicted herald of the Messiah; and the

prophecies were fulfilling in His character and miracles; so that it needed little sagacity to perceive that, as the Baptist had announced, the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

71. *The disciples are warned against the Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Matt. xvi. 5—12. Mark viii. 14—21.*

The disciples on their embarking had forgotten to supply themselves with bread, and the fragments of their late miraculous meal being exhausted, they had but a loaf remaining. While uneasy on this account, Jesus, with a reference to what had just occurred, warned them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, of the Sadducees, and of Herod. They took His warning literally, which led Him to reprove them for distrust, as if He could not as easily supply them with necessary provisions, as the thousands whom He had twice fed miraculously; and likewise for their dulness in not comprehending that He referred not to the leaven of bread, which, as He had already taught, was not one of the things that could defile, but to the superstition of the first, the infidelity of the second, and the worldlinindness of the third, which like leaven would sour and corrupt the mind.

72. *Jesus restores the Sight of a Blind man by degrees.*  
*Mark viii. 22—26.*

On landing at Bethsaida, Jesus restored a blind man to sight at the request of his friends. In this miracle, as in that of the deaf man with an impediment in his speech, He made use of a symbolical action. To us it seems an extraordinary one, but the Jews believed that fasting spittle had a medicinal effect on diseased eyes, and it was employed by

them for that purpose with an invocation of God. The same notion prevailed among the heathen; thus the blind man, who applied to the Emperor Vespasian<sup>m</sup>, declared his persuasion that he could restore his sight by spitting into his eyes. This miracle differs from the rest recorded, in its being at first incomplete; the man saw objects indistinctly—men as trees walking—but Jesus touched his eyes once more, and he saw them as they really appear. It has been observed, that this progressive cure affords a decisive proof not only of the power, but also of the supernatural knowledge, of Christ, for it shows that He knew, seventeen centuries before it was suspected by the most sagacious and inquisitive philosophers, that the perfection of the organs of sight without practice is not sufficient to render vision distinct. Thus, a fact, unintelligible when recorded, lies as it were useless for centuries, till an age more advanced in knowledge supplies the key to open the hidden meaning.

It was universally believed, till the time of Locke, that a man born blind would immediately see as well as other men, if the organs of vision were suddenly rendered perfect: but the contrary conclusion, to which he was led by theory, was established as a fact, when Cheselden for the first time removed a cataract from the eyes of a young man who had never enjoyed sight. It appears, that though his patient saw, he could not discriminate objects by their figure or magnitude: they all looked extremely large, and he imagined that they touched his eyes, and he was obliged to spend a year in learning to see like other men, that is, in acquiring experience of the alterations made in the ideas of sight by judgment. The identity of imperfection observable in the vision of this young man, and of the person cured by our Lord, convinces us, that effects so similar must have been produced by the same cause; and consequently, that the subject of the miracle had been blind

<sup>m</sup> Tacitus, Hist. iv. 81.



from his birth, though the fact is not recorded by the Evangelist. Jesus by the first touch effected the removal of the cataract, and gave the man an opportunity to describe the imperfection of his sight, in a manner sufficiently clear to prove, (not to his contemporaries, but to a more scientific age,) that this had only rendered the organs perfect, and that it was the second which conferred the advantages of experience. As the speech recorded by Mark could only have been made by one who had been born blind, it affords incontrovertible evidence of the reality of the miracle. Jesus led the man out of the town before He cured him, and when his blindness was entirely removed, directed him not to return, nor relate the case, leaving the inhabitants to their awful state of infidelity and impenitence<sup>n</sup>.

73. *Peter repeats his Confession, that Jesus is the Messiah.*

*Matt. xvi. 13—20. Luke ix. 18—20.*

On His way to the borders of Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus enquired of His Apostles what notion the people had formed concerning Him, and having been told their several opinions, He asked their own, *But whom say ye that I am?* The Son of Man, the title by which He here and in several other places designates Himself, is never given to Him by others, and was probably assumed, both as a mark of humility, and with reference to the nature which He had taken into union with His deity, to enable Him, by undergoing suffering, to atone for the sins of the human race, and to exalt us to happiness superior to that from which our progenitor fell. He not merely restores us to the original human perfection which Adam had by transgression, but makes us in a subordinate sense sons of God, and joint-heirs with Himself of His Father's glory. Thus, *where sin did abound,*

<sup>n</sup> Graves's Essay on the Character of the Apostles.

Divine grace not only brought the remedy, but *did much more abound*. The term occurs in the Old Testament, generally as an oriental idiom for man himself; *God is not the son of man that He should repent*; (Numb. xxxiii. 19.) and Ezekiel is continually so addressed by the angel, to mark the difference, it should seem, between their respective natures. But our Lord uses it to show that He is the second Adam, the new covenant head and elder brother of the race, under whom, more completely than under His type the original man, God hath placed all things in subjection, and whom He has crowned with honour, by exalting Him to the throne of the universe, and requiring not only men but angels to worship Him. In most instances the allusion is to His present humiliation or future glory; and Bp. Middleton considers the phrase an irrefragable proof of His preexistence and divinity. Under this very title He had been designated by Daniel, (vii. 13.) *Behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days; and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him*. To this passage He Himself draws attention, not only in the parable, (Matt. xxv.) in which He describes Himself on His throne sitting in judgment on the world, but when, upon His trial, He announced His second advent “in glorious majesty.” His, Apostles, when they speak of His priestly office, emphatically dwell upon His human nature; as, *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*; (1 Tim. ii. 5.) *By Man came death, by Man came also the resurrection from the dead*; (1 Cor. xv. 21.) *The second Man is a quickening Spirit*. (ver. 47.) Anti-Trinitarians, not perceiving the reason of this reference to the nature our Lord assumed, catch at such expressions as evidence of His simple humanity. But they forget, that the beloved Apostle (Rev. i. 13.) gives Him this very title, when he describes Him as

appearing in a glory so intense, that he fell at His feet as dead, and was assured by Him that He was *the first and the last, and had the keys of death and of hell*. He Himself also now employs it, when He draws forth Peter's blessed confession, *Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?* Peter, with his usual promptitude, replied for all, *The Christ, the Son of the living God*; and thus the question and the answer connect together His manhood and His divinity. Our Lord pronounced Him happy, as His conviction of the truth proceeded not from man's teaching, nor from his own reflection, but had been revealed to Him by the Father. This high commendation proves that his faith was genuine: it was, however, imperfect, for He knew not as yet that redemption was to be purchased by His Lord's blood, who was to be the Priest as well as the King of His Church. Jesus, alluding to the name which He had given him, which signifies a *Stone*, Πέτρος, declared, that upon this *Rock*, Πέτρα, that is, upon this confession of His Divinity and His Office, (which includes atonement, and all the essential doctrines dependent on it,) He *will build His Church, and that the gates of Hades* [or the Grave] *shall not prevail against it*. The prophecy has been wonderfully accomplished, for neither the power nor policy of Jews or Heathens, neither the rage of persecuting Emperors, nor the more dangerous craft of Julian, could annihilate the Church at a time when no human authority sustained it; and in the dark ages of Papal supremacy, when, speaking generally, throughout Europe Christianity had been so alloyed and disfigured with superstition and error, as almost to appear another Gospel than that which the Apostles preached, its leading truths were still retained in a few obscure Alpine valleys, till they again in God's good time were announced as their Articles of Faith in the Confessions of the Protestants both of the Continent and of Britain. The religion of Mahomet, it must be confessed, has nearly banished it from

the lesser Asia, the field of its earliest victories, and domineers over it in what may be called its native land; and the Candlestick of northern Africa, the land of Cyprian and Augustine, the scene of so many martyrdoms, has been long removed; but the promise is to the universal Church, not to any particular branch of it, and when the light has been extinguished in one country, it has been kindled in another. Thus, what has been lost in Africa and Asia, has been more than compensated by its progress first in the north of Europe, afterwards in the new World, and now by its recent triumphs at Sierra Leone, in India, and in the isles of the Pacific Ocean.

It is known to all, that this reply of our Lord to St. Peter is the chief Scriptural authority to which Roman Catholics appeal in support of Papal Supremacy. The nature of this work requires rather the consideration of the scope of a discourse or speech, than a minute investigation of texts; but this is one so pregnant with meaning, and has exercised and still exercises so important an influence over individuals and nations, that it forms an exception from my rule; and therefore I shall examine briefly, considering the extent and variety of the subject, yet necessarily at some length, and historically as well as theologically, the consequences drawn from it in support of the despotic Sovereignty of St. Peter's reputed successors. Despotic sovereignty it may well be called, whether we look to its pretensions, or the arrogance with which it was enforced; and the title of Universal Bishop, lofty as it is, does not adequately express the extent of his jurisdiction, as he claims among his rights or royalties, as he terms them, not only to govern Bishops, who all swear to pay to him true obedience, but to create them out of the plenitude of his power, which (to use the language of Barrow) "hath devoured all the privileges of all orders in the Church, either granted by God, or established in the ancient Canons." It is

° Treatise on the Pope's Supremacy, Oxford, 1836, p. 199.

only in an age of ignorance that a doctrine so contrary to reason could have originated; once originated, recourse was had to Scripture to sustain it, and this text was the most favourable one that they could find. The critic will allow that this application of it is untenable; yet though he removes the foundation, the edifice still remains, undermined and shaken indeed, yet still standing, and not likely to fall till after many repeated assaults. It is remarkable that we have no account of the introduction of Christianity into the capital of the Empire; but, as there were strangers of Rome among the thousands assembled in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when Peter and the rest founded the Christian Church, we presume that some of them carried back the Gospel to the Imperial city. Whoever conveyed to the Jews settled there this blessing, we know that the Roman Church was so flourishing, that when addressed by St. Paul, its Faith was spoken of throughout the whole world, though it had not as yet been visited by an Apostle. We know also from the Acts, that St. Peter, being liberated from prison by an Angel, and taking leave of the disciples, departed for another place, some say Antioch, others Rome; for Tradition reports, that he presided seven years over the first, and twenty-five over the latter. Ecclesiastical writers so confidently affirm his occasional residence at Rome, and his martyrdom there, that I think the fact cannot be reasonably questioned, though it is impossible to adjust the chronology of his visits. He must have been absent while Paul lived there two years in a lodging, as there is no mention of him in the Epistles he wrote thence to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians; nor yet when from his second confinement in a prison he informed Timothy that all had deserted him, and only Luke was with him. Allowing for a moment, for argument's sake, the supremacy of Peter himself, we can hardly suppose that, if transferable, he would bequeath it to a local Bishop, though

he were Bishop of the Metropolis, and not rather to St. John, who long survived him. It would indeed be strange, that the beloved Disciple should be placed under the jurisdiction of an obscure Linus or Anacletus, or even of a Clement, though his name were *written in the book of Life*. As Barrow observes, it would have been a degradation of himself, and a disparagement of the Apostolical majesty, for him to take upon himself the Bishopric of Rome, as if the King should become a Mayor, or a Bishop a Deacon. It is reasonable to infer, that the office died with him as with the rest, and that the Bishops who succeeded them were limited to sees in which each was supreme, while the Apostles had exercised a general superintendence over all Churches, and agreed as to the distribution of them among themselves. It was St. Peter's duty to itinerate, as we learn from his own Epistles he did in Asia Minor, especially among believers of the circumcision, and to appoint local Bishops where congregations were formed, as St. Paul ordained Titus for Crete, and Timothy for Ephesus; and it appears from the early authority of Irenæus, that in this instance they united in conferring Episcopal authority. Epiphanius (Hær. 27.) infers, that it was needful that the Apostles should constitute a Bishop resident in Rome, because they travelled often into other countries to preach, and the Capital of the Empire ought not to be without one. The earliest notice we have of the Roman Church explains the whole difficulty. The two most glorious Apostles, says Irenæus, (iii. 3.) assigned the Episcopacy to Linus, who is named in the second Epistle to Timothy; (iv. 21.) to him succeeded Anacletus, and to him Clement, the author of an Epistle to the Corinthians, that they (as Rufinus affirms, Præf. ad Recogn. ii. Cl.) might take the Episcopal charge, while Peter acted as an Apostle. He is said to have been appointed by these Apostles, the others we suppose dying before them, and is expressly

called the third, not the fourth as he ought to have been, if St. Peter is to be reckoned as a Bishop. He made Bishops, but was not one, he was much more, he was an Apostle ; and therefore the Popes must be content to trace their succession up only to Linus, and can surely claim no jurisdiction beyond their own territory, the patrimony as they call it of St. Peter. It was reasonable that a preeminence of dignity should from the first be allowed to the Bishop of Rome, especially by the Christians of Africa, and of the western provinces of the empire, and natural that ambitious Pontiffs should seek to convert respect into substantial power. It was, however, human authorities, not divine, that they called in to support their high claims, for no Scripture can be brought forward in favour of St. Peter's presumed successors, whatever may be thought of this speech to that Apostle as respecting himself. Nor was the attempt made till after a long period of time, for the first Bishops of Rome were too pious and humble to yield to the temptation that beset and overcame those of a later age. Clement, the companion and friend of St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, in the hope of restoring, like the Apostle, harmony and peace in that distracted Church, does not presume to settle their disputes by interposing the authority of his see ; nor does Ignatius, who in all his Epistles is anxious to magnify the Episcopal office, intimate in that to the Romans that their Bishop had any higher claim to obedience than those of the other cities which he addressed. St. Cyprian, who had correspondence with Roman Bishops, expressly asserts (Ep. lv.) the equality of the Order, and none of the Fathers, from Origen to Jerome and Augustin, treat of the Roman supremacy even in their notes on this very passage, which seems to us to invite a discussion of it. We learn from their extant writings, that the Popes of early times had no suspicion of their right to decide, and of what necessarily accompanies such a right, the infallibility of their judgment ;

for Liberius, as an instance, solicited the opinion of St. Athanasius, (i. p. 243.) that, whatever it was, he might follow it. To complete this negative line of argument, (and positive ones cannot be expected on a point on which there was no opponent to confute,) there is no Canon of any Council that declares the Papal Authority, and it is only mentioned incidentally in determining the rank of the Bishop of Alexandria, (Conc. Nic. 6.) and in assigning to that of Constantinople the seat of Government, the second place of honour, because as it already enjoyed as new Rome equal civil privileges, it should be alike magnified in its ecclesiastical jurisdiction. (Conc. Constant. 2. Conc. Chalced. 28.) The political arrangement of the Church accommodated itself to that of the State, and as the officers of the latter had been placed under four Prætorian Prefects, so the Bishops, Archbishops, and Metropolitans, ranked in due subordination under the four Patriarchs of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria; but there was no supreme Pontiff answering to the Emperor, who, till the fall of the Empire, continued though a layman, as Pontifex Maximus, to be the head of the Church. The Synod of Chalcedon, which Rome cannot refuse to acknowledge as a General Council, silenced her claims in the East, and cut off at once from her dominion a majority of sees; for of the eighteen hundred Bishops of the empire, only eight hundred were seated in the Latin provinces, and till a later age, all, whether their dioceses were spread over a Province, or limited to a single city, derived from the Law as well as from their divine Master, the same power and privileges<sup>b</sup>. Papists and Protestants are both apt to forget, how large a portion of Christendom, long before Protestantism had a name or an existence, had never submitted to the Papal sway. The Maronites, and some schismatic sections of Nestorians and Armenians, and others

<sup>b</sup> Gibbon, vol. iii. ch. 20.



neither numerous nor influential, are the only Latin Christians in the East; and when we recollect, that in our own days Greece has become a Monarchy, independent of the Turkish Sultan, that the Sultan himself has many Christian subjects, and that these and a vast majority of the inhabitants of the immense Russian Empire profess the same faith, we cannot but think that the Greek Church may become a more formidable rival than is at first apparent to the Roman.

In the West, however, circumstances have singularly favoured the Papacy. The Patriarchal authority was much promoted by the continued absence of the Emperors, first at Constantinople, and, after the division of the Empire, at Milan or Ravenna. It was also the only European Church of any note that could claim connection with the Apostles, and above all it was the spiritual mother of the northern nations, without or within the pale, who owe to Rome their civilization as well as their faith. Independence, which had been long secretly enjoyed, was first proclaimed by the second Gregory, A.D. 729, who, exasperated by Leo's edict against the worship of Images, followed up by the destruction of them, renounced openly his allegiance, taunting him with his inability to defend Rome, and with the spirit of his seventh namesake, of an Innocent III. or a Boniface VIII. declared that "while the Emperor alone was deaf to the voice of the Shepherd, the Barbarians submitted to the yoke of the Gospel, and revered as God upon earth St. Peter, whose image he threatened to destroy." The Papal power was soon consolidated by the mutual obligations of the Carlovingian dynasty and the Popes; for while the Roman empire was revived in the person of Charlemagne, he in return transformed the Pope's ancient patrimony of farms and houses, into the dominion of cities and provinces, so that the world beheld for the first time a Christian Bishop, invested with the prerogatives of a temporal Prince. The power thus acquired was soon completed, and

sanctified by extraordinary fraud. The "False Decretals" and the "Donation of Constantine," the "two magic pillars," as Gibbon<sup>i</sup> calls them, "of spiritual and temporal monarchy," and the most celebrated monuments of human imposture and credulity, were put forth about the conclusion of the eighth century, and immediately and universally received as genuine<sup>k</sup>. Their direct object was the unlimited advancement of the Roman See, which the former accomplished chiefly by asserting the Pope's exclusive right of summoning Councils, by subjecting other Bishops to him alone, and by promoting the practice of appeals to Rome. The Decretals are a series of Epistles professing to be written by the earliest Bishops of Rome, and were brought out from the comparative obscurity in which they had reposed for above two centuries and a half, by Gregory the Seventh, who probably never doubted their authenticity, and rejoiced in the possession of an instrument, which he could employ so powerfully in promoting his ambitions scheme of domineering over both Church and State. These fabrications of an unknown author, as they are now allowed to be, imposed for ages upon Emperors, and even Popes themselves; and though long since given up by their most bigotted advocates, still retain their place in the Canon Law. By a singular felicity the foundations are removed, and the edifice remains. No historical fact is better attested than that the first Christian Emperor was not admitted into the Church till immediately before his death; yet according to the legend universally received for centuries, though now rejected, Constantine was baptized at Rome by Pope Sylvester, in the Baptistery of St. John Lateran, and, departing to found his new capital in the East, resigned in his favour the free and perpetual sovereignty of the West. According to this fable the Pope reigned, not by the favour of modern Princes,

<sup>i</sup> Decline and Fall, vol. ix. ch. 49.

<sup>k</sup> Waddington's History of the Church, p. 223. 286.

but by a grant of the first Christian Emperor, and was discharged from his debt of gratitude to Charlemagne and his successors, since upon this theory their donation was only the restitution of a scanty portion of his rightful inheritance. It must be confessed, that in ages of feudal licentiousness and cruelty, the influence of the Church and its acknowledged Head was beneficially exerted in promoting civilization and humanity, and in enforcing justice, when these objects did not interfere with the peculiar claims of Rome. This and other concurring causes less honourable, such as the selfishness of some eminent Churchmen and the timidity of others, and the mutual jealousy of Sovereigns, rivetted the chains of Europe. Christendom was overawed by a spiritual Sovereignty, which, more ambitious than that of ancient Rome, aspired to reign over the souls as well as the bodies of men, and comprehended within its limits Purgatory as well as Earth. Its doctrines harmonized with the prevailing superstition, while its ceremonies captivated the imagination, and worked upon the feelings. Its claims were urged not always in a parental, sometimes in a tyrannical tone, and it had therefore occasionally to encounter opposition. Still, though it placed kingdoms under interdict and deposed kings, Rome contrived to come victorious out of the combat, partly by setting Sovereign against Sovereign, partly through the agency both of the regular and secular Clergy, whose feelings were all, through a compulsory celibacy, absorbed in the advancement of the Church. In vain had the Council of Constance A. D. 1414, decreed its own supremacy, deposed rival Popes, and elected a new one: the claim to obedience was still no less haughtily made, till, as it appears to me, the acmé of Power was reached, when Alexander VI. A. D. 1493, conferred upon the Crown of Castile the right to possess all that Columbus had discovered, or what might yet be discovered; and, drawing a line along the map, gave away by a stroke of

his pen half the habitable world. The Portuguese indeed contested the validity of the Act, but they did not rest their opposition upon any rational ground; they only maintained, that by a similar act a preceding Pope had previously bestowed the same rights upon them. The Papacy, considered in its origin, duration, and success, is the most wonderful phenomenon in history. It is perhaps not extraordinary, that in a superstitious age a man like Gregory VII. should triumph over an Emperor; but it is astonishing, that their power should have been so established, that it survived both their crimes and their mistakes in policy. Popes were set up against Popes, and both Pope and Anti-Pope were often overbearing, sometimes profligate; and for seventy years they voluntarily divested themselves of the charm to which they owed their advancement from Prelacy to Sovereignty, when as vassals of France they exchanged the banks of the Tiber for those of the Rhone. A Julius acted the part of a Cæsar, a Leo<sup>1</sup> became the Patron of Letters and the Arts, when in the plenitude of his prosperity this voluptuary was awakened from his dreams of pleasure and ambition by the voice of a Monk, the son of a Saxon miner, who shook to its foundations his cloud-capped gorgeous palace, declared war against Rome, committed its Bulls to the flames, A.D. 1517, and denounced to Christendom its profligate sale of Pardons. These gross abuses had long been lamented by the pious; but it was reserved for Luther to overthrow its foundation, by restoring from the Epistle to the Romans the long-forgotten truth of Justification by Faith only, "that most wholesome doctrine, very full of comfort," the standard, as he called it, of a rising or falling Church. Yet, such is the vitality of the system, that though the north of Europe has been ever since lost to Rome, it has been able through the Inquisition to crush the Reformation in Spain and Italy, and through the bigotry of the sove-

<sup>1</sup> Waddington's History of the Church, p. 652.

reign to weaken it in France. Through the Order of the Jesuits, coeval with Luther, especially sworn to promote the interests of the Pope, Rome has recovered much that it had lost. It has improved in discipline from the Pontiff to the Friar, and has got a stronger hold of schools and the confessional. Reestablished after the storm of the French Republic and Empire, it still governs not now by force but by persuasion, no longer a roaring lion, but having the voice of a lamb. The only Scriptural grounds which Romanists bring forward in support of Papal supremacy is this reply to St. Peter, and the Saviour's thrice repeated charge to Him after the Resurrection, (which I shall consider in its proper connection,) and yet it is impossible to show that either is more than personal, and can be communicated to any other. The Apostolic office is even by them allowed to be such in all other instances, and why should an extension of the grant be made more to Him than St. John? In them, and we may conclude in him, it was temporary, not successive, conferred in a special manner, designed for special purposes, discharged by special aids, and endured with special privileges for the founding of Churches; and for that office it was requisite that this functionary should have an immediate commission from God, and should be able to attest concerning our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension. He should also possess miraculous gifts, and no one diocese, not even Rome, but the whole world, was to be his Province. This Apostleship then was not transferable; but to confine our attention to St. Peter, to whom it was exclusively addressed, its meaning, as far as we are concerned, is a subject more of curiosity than importance, since his preeminence, in whatever it might consist, has long since passed away.

Two interpretations have been current from the beginning, before the judgment of the supporters of either could have been warped against or in favour of the Pope. The earliest, for it is recorded by Justin Martyr, not half a century after

St. John, considers the rock on which Christ professes to build His Church to be St. Peter's confession: the later, which first I believe appears in St. Cyprian, (Ep. 27.) takes it for his person, thus expressed by Chrysostom; Upon this *rock*, ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ Πέτρᾳ, He said not upon this *stone*, ἐπὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ, for He did not build the Church upon the man, but upon his faith. According to Bp. Marsh, (chap. x.) these distinctions between Πέτρος and Πέτρᾳ in Greek, and *Petrus* and *Petra* in the Latin Vulgate, are unworthy of a critic, as our Saviour spoke in Syriac; and in the version in that language, the same word *Cepha*, in Greek Κηφᾶς, is used in both places, both as an appellative and a proper name. The *Confession* appears to me to be more in harmony with the analogy of faith, as the Church, strictly speaking, is built upon our blessed Master Himself, (though certainly I conceive not so implied in this place, as many ancient German Protestant commentators maintain,) who is *that stone, that tried stone, that precious corner stone, which the Lord God hath laid in Zion for a sure foundation*; (Isaiah xxviii. 16.) and St. Paul, in his comparison of it to a material fabric, marks the equality of its ministers in this respect. *Built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.* (Eph. ii. 20.) That he knew of no supreme Pastor upon earth, no Vicar of Christ, no Head of the Catholic Church, is evident from what he writes to the Ephesians, (iv. 11) and to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. xii. 28.) that *God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets*, in which words we hear him, according to Chrysostom, placing, when reckoning up powers, the Apostolical office in the highest rank. The authorities, both ancient and modern, preponderate in favour of the other meaning. This is, however, immaterial, for they substantially coincide; for the text conveys, as paraphrased by Dr. Wells, this sense; Thou art Peter, that is, a *Rock*, so named by Me, as foreseeing that by thy constancy in this confession, after

My Resurrection and Ascension, thou shalt eminently be what thy name imports, a firm and immoveable professor of the truth. And as upon the foundations of My Apostles in general, so *upon thee*, this *Rock*, in a special manner, namely, as the first and most eminent part of the foundation, *I will build My Church*. Whichever interpretation we may adopt, this declaration can mean no more than what is conveyed in the following words, *To thee I will give the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*; which denotes, as we learn from his conduct on the day of Pentecost, and from the Baptism of Cornelius, that he was the person chosen for the high honour of opening the Church both to the Jews and to the Gentiles, who were Proselytes. The possession of the keys in this sense is his only peculiar privilege, that is, priority in service, not superiority in power, and this commission fulfilled by him once for all could not from its nature be repeated. That privilege, it is evident, gave him no higher authority than the rest, for if he had a power given him of binding and loosing, so had they in as full manner, and couched in the same terms. Had he a privilege to remit and retain sins? it was then by virtue of a common promise. Had he power and obligation to feed the sheep of Christ? so had they, so had others by authority derived from them. Was his commandment universal and unlimited? so was theirs by the same immediate authority, *Go ye into all the world*, &c. They, as Chrysostom speaketh, were all in common entrusted with the whole world, and had the care of all nations. Whatever Jerome and other Fathers may say, this declaration did not give Peter even an honorary precedence; for though he was present in the Council of Jerusalem, St. James presided, and we know that on another occasion at Antioch, said to be his peculiar See, St. Paul withstood him publicly, because he was to blame, and that on an essential point; a fact which disproves his own infallibility, and of course that of his reputed successors. It is indeed observable, that upon all occasions our Lord signified a par-

ticular regard unto him above his colleagues, and He speaks for the rest when they could not all speak; but even after this promise we find the Apostles more than once disputing among themselves who should be their chief. This strife our Lord checks, not by telling them that he had already decided the case by appointing him their superior, but that he intended to have no monarchy of one over the rest, and affirming that they were to be all on an equality. *Be not ye called Rabbi, [Teacher,] for one is your Master, [Teacher,] even Christ, and all ye are brethren.* (Matt. xxiii. 8.) *The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, but it shall not be so with you.* Thus did our Lord forbid that any of them should exercise dominion over the rest, as worldly princes did over their subjects. Surely the Apostles could not have understood Him in the same sense as modern Romanists, for would they have contended for the chief place if they had understood that it was his by our Lord's own previous determination? Would they have enquired of Him who should be the greatest in His kingdom, if they knew that our Lord had announced His will? Their equality has been declared too frequently and too clearly to be mistaken; and we know that it was rightly understood by St. Peter himself; for in his Epistles he does not command as Christ's Vicar, but *exhorts the elders as also an elder.* (1 Pet. v. 1.) Instead of referring them for guidance to an infallible successor, (2 Pet. i. 14.) *when he has put off his tabernacle*; he writes *to put them in remembrance*, and having charged them *to feed the flock*, (2 Pet. v. 2, 3.) *not as being lords over God's heritage, but ensamples*, he calls upon them to render an account of their stewardship, not to his successor at Rome, but *to the Bishop of their souls, the only chief Shepherd*, whom he acknowledges, from whom they, who are appointed by the Holy Ghost (Acts xx. 28.) *overseers, [bishops,] when He shall appear, shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

We see then that the Papal claim to govern the Church



derives no support from Scripture, and the silence of Scripture is borne out by History, and the fact of the limited faculties of man. We can imagine a Prelate presiding, though inadequately, over the Clergy and the ecclesiastical concerns of a mighty empire, as one king can direct its temporal affairs; but the difficulty awfully augments in the ratio of its increasing extent and population, and the sovereignty of the world would be too burdensome for human nature. View Rome as the final court of appeal from inferior tribunals, and as sending their pall to all the Archbishops of Christendom, divided into monarchies and republics, speaking different languages, and varying in opinions and habits, customs and institutions. Without counting upon the millions, who we hope will in time be comprehended within its pale, take Christendom as it now is, from the North Cape, and reappearing after an intervening blank of idolatry in the southern extremity of the globe in the East, and extending from India to nearly the whole of the new world, and say where we shall discover an individual equal to such an office! Even suppose his will as pure as can be wished, and his zeal indefatigable, no knowledge or wisdom short of infinite are competent to such an undertaking. What judgment then can we pronounce on him, who, being no more than a man, presumes to seat himself as Christ's Vicerent on his throne? May he not be truly said to *exalt himself above all that is called God, and is worshipped*? He alone, whose eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good, can worthily occupy that throne; and it should have been reserved for Him, who at His next advent will *take to Himself His great power, and reign*, judging from it mankind, at the close of the present dispensation<sup>m</sup>. The grand argument, they urge for a visible head of the universal Church,

<sup>m</sup> Dr. Hinds' Three Temples of the one true God contrasted, Oxford, 1830, p. 33.

is the necessity of having a judge to decide controversies; but an infallible judge on earth, if such could be found, is not suited to the present established scheme of probation, and they who boast of this privilege only mock us with a show of uniformity. It was the artful policy of Bossuet to exaggerate the differences of opinion among all who had withdrawn from the self-styled seat of unity; but he has been recently stigmatized by a divine<sup>n</sup>, who has examined his *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches*, as an unprincipled and unscrupulous advocate, adopting without investigation every unfavourable report. In their own, notwithstanding their boast of it, uniformity of opinion has never really been preserved, for their oracle has not ventured to speak, when speaking would offend any powerful party; as, for instance, it has not decided the Predestinarian controversy, which has agitated Dominicans and Jesuits as much as Calvinists and Arminians; while it has been proved by a comparison of the accredited formularies of the Protestant Churches, as the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions, and our own Articles, which are in part taken from them, that, though from circumstances they differ in government, in doctrine they are substantially one<sup>o</sup>.

74. *Jesus plainly foretells His Death and Resurrection, rebukes Peter, and exhorts them all to self-denial.* Matt. xvi. 21—28. Mark viii. 31—38. Luke ix. 22—27.

Having elicited the confession of His being the Messiah, and having confirmed its truth by the authority He in consequence committed to Peter, Jesus proceeded to reveal more

<sup>n</sup> Archdeacon Hare's Sermons on the Comforter.

<sup>o</sup> See *Harmonia Confessionum Fidei Orthodox. et Reformat. Ecclesiarum*, Genevæ 1581; or the translation into English, Cambridge 1586.

explicitly than He had done hitherto the real nature of His reign, and checked their rising hopes of wealth and dignity, by declaring that He must go to Jerusalem, not to assume His sovereignty, but to be put to death. This was so contrary to the worldly triumph which they anticipated, that Peter, who had overlooked the predictions of an afflicted and rejected Messiah, and was perhaps elated by the commendation he had just received, with the affection of ignorance expressed his hope that He was mistaken. But Jesus silenced him in the very words with which He had before rebuked the devil: *Get thee behind me, Satan, that is, Enemy*, adding, that he was *a stumbling-block*<sup>p</sup>, in tempting Him to give up, on account of the suffering and shame which awaited Him, the great work which He had come into the world to accomplish, declaring he did not *relish* (*φρονεῖν*) the spiritual *things of God, but the things of man*, such as ease, honour, and riches. He then called the people to Him, as self-denial was equally the duty of all, and said, that whoever was disposed to follow Him must deny his natural inclinations, and must be ready, if called upon, even to die in His cause. He added for their encouragement, that he who was faithful unto death, would hereafter receive an adequate recompense, as much more valuable than earthly life, as that life is to its accompanying enjoyments, which can profit nothing a person about to quit it. To strengthen them to endure the temporary privations to which He called them, He brought before their minds the future judgment, declaring that when He came in glory, He would then be ashamed of those who now were ashamed of Him. Probably there was some expression of incredulity upon their countenances, as He cautioned them against unbelief, and declared that some who were present should not die till they saw Him coming in His reign. That generation has long since passed away, and Christ has not

<sup>p</sup> An offence. A.T.

yet come in His own glory, and in that of His Father, to reward every man according to his work. The obvious interpretation then cannot be the true one, and some other must be sought. There are commentators who interpret it of His showing Himself six days after to His three most confidential Apostles, in His Glory, which He had quitted in order to become flesh. This, the opinion of Chrysostom, is ably supported by Bishop Porteus. But so short an interval seems fatal to it, since surely not some but all present must have outlived His Transfiguration, which was also not so much the commencement of His kingdom as the anticipation of it. And therefore it appears better to refer it to that period, when our Lord, perfected by sufferings, divested Himself *of the form of a servant*, and ascended to His Father, when He properly commenced His reign, and came in glory, by sending down on His followers the gift of the Holy Ghost; and not long after came in the clouds, through the arrangements of His providence, to remove that great obstacle to its progress, the religious polity of the Jews. As St. John, who is supposed to be specially intended, outlived the destruction of the Temple and its service, this interpretation appears to be the best, and harmonizes with the declaration of his Master concerning him, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* and with His prophecy, that the present generation would not pass away till it saw the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. His discourse had not overcome their prejudices, and therefore He endeavoured to impress the truth upon their minds, as on other occasions, by a significant action. The scene of this change of appearance, or transfiguration, as we translate metamorphosis, was a mountain, which Jesus ascended with Peter, James, and John, in order to pray, and in the act of prayer He was transfigured.

75. *The Transfiguration.* Matt. xvii. 1—13. Mark ix. 1—13.  
Luke ix. 28—36.

These three disciples saw their Master daily in the *form of a servant*, as the Son of Man. On this one occasion they were permitted to behold Him *as the Only-Begotten of the Father*, and enjoyed as complete a view of Him *in the form of God* as they were able to bear. His appearance, bright and dazzling as the sun, or snow, would give them some faint conception of the glory which He had had before His incarnation, and would resume after His ascension; and some anticipation also of the glory which awaited them, when hereafter His almighty energy should transform their vile mortal bodies into a resemblance of His glorious body, when they should be like Him, because they should see Him as He is. It would also serve to explain to them the meaning of Peter's recent confession, *Thou art the Son of the living God*; and to support their faith during His approaching humiliation, there appeared also in glory with Him, Moses and Elijah, the one the Giver of the Law, the other its Restorer in a period of all but universal defection; and these conversed with Jesus on His death; the very subject on which Peter had so lately presumed to reprehend Him. This ought to have convinced them that that event would be no disgrace, but was necessary to the fulfilment of His office of Messiah. But they seem to have fallen asleep. Peter, awaking, broke out into an exclamation, that it was good to remain there, and not go down to meet the sufferings, of which he was so reluctant to hear. In this, however, he was mistaken, he knew not what he said. The sacrifice, without which he could not be accepted, must first be offered, and services remained for him and his brethren to perform, which would promote the Divine glory by the extension and edification of the Church after their

own decease, even to the end of time. He seems to have considered Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, as of equal dignity and authority, for he adds, *Let us make three tabernacles*. While the Apostle was thus speaking, a bright cloud, like that, we may presume, which hung over the Mercy-seat in the first temple, the symbol of the Divine Presence, overshadowed them, and from it the voice was heard, *This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased*; being the same testimony that was borne to Him at His baptism; to which was added the command, *Hear ye Him*, that is, in preference to Moses and Elijah. They are God's servants, He alone is His Son; they came not to share His glory, but to acknowledge His preeminence, by whose obedience the morality of the law was magnified, and in whose passion and death its ceremonies and types were about to be fulfilled. Moses and Elijah vanish; Christ alone remains, the sole and unrivalled object of their reverence. The glory of the vision was more than the faculties of men, who were still in the body, could long endure; awed and overpowered, they lay with their faces on the ground, till Jesus touched them, and encouraged them to rise. On arising, and looking round, they found that the visitants from the world of spirits had departed, and that their Master was alone with them, in His usual appearance. It is thought that a degree of brightness remained upon His face, as that of Moses shone, when he came down from his conference with God in Mount Sinai, because the multitude expressed amazement on his return, and treated him with more than ordinary deference. The effect however produced was the reverse, and characteristic of the difference between the Law and the Gospel. When Moses came down, the people were afraid of approaching him; but so attractive was the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ, that they running to Him saluted Him. (Mark ix. 15.)

On descending, He charged them to mention the vision to

none till after His resurrection, not even, it should seem, to the other Apostles. Before that event it would not have obtained credit, and it was designed, at present, more for their own support than the conviction of others. St. John seems to refer to the Transfiguration, (i. 14.) when in the introduction to his Gospel he speaks of having seen the glory of the Logos; and he was cheered in his exile in Patmos by a similar and longer view of his Redeemer in the robes of High Priest, with a countenance shining like the sun in his strength. The scene, transitory as it was, made such an abiding impression upon St. Peter, that in his second Epistle, written many years after, a little before his death, he argues from it, that he had not followed *cunningly devised fables*; that he had neither deceived, nor been himself mistaken, for he had been an eyewitness of the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, *when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, which he heard when he was with Him in the holy mount.* (2 Peter i. 16—19.) *The Law and the Prophets were until John*, who came to usher in the Christian dispensation, and this appearance of Moses and Elijah seems to announce that their authority was about to vanish away. This will assist in explaining the injunction of secrecy, since the abolition of the ceremonial law was one of the truths which even the Apostles were unable to bear, till they were taught it by the Holy Ghost. His mention of the resurrection of the Son of Man perplexed them, as with the rest of their countrymen they believed that the Messiah was to abide for ever; and they could not understand why Elijah had disappeared, for it was the popular notion that he should come to prepare the nation for His advent, as Malachi had foretold. The fact the Messiah allowed, but explained it in a manner that showed, that the person designated by that figure was the Baptist; and this explanation authorizes, where the context requires it, the figurative interpretation of Prophecy, though commentators till

of late have too much abandoned the literal meaning, which, when no strong objection can be shown, ought to be preferred.

76. *Jesus on His descent cures a Demoniac, whom His disciples were unable to dispossess. Matt. xvii. 14—21. Mark ix. 41—29. Luke ix. 37—42.*

During their absence, a father had brought for cure to the remaining nine, his son, whom a Demon tormented with Epilepsy, then called Lunacy, because supposed to be under the influence of the moon. On their late mission they had found the evil spirits subject to them; but they were now baffled, not, I apprehend, because this demon was more difficult to cast out than others, but because their faith had failed. Our Lord on His return found the Scribes disputing with them; arguing, we may suppose from the failure of the servants, to the inability of the Master. And His address, *faithless and perverse generation*, which includes both, supports this explanation. He revived the father's hope, by ordering the demoniac to be brought to Himself; and after suffering the demon to display all his tremendous power, by throwing down and convulsing the boy, he dismissed him by a word of authority. The faith of the father was inferior in degree to that of many whose cases are recorded, but it was genuine, for it brought him as a suppliant, notwithstanding the failure of the Apostles; and his petition, *Increase my faith*, seems to show a conception, however indistinct, of the superiority of Jesus to a prophet, and of His power not only of casting out evil spirits, but also of enlightening the understanding, and influencing the heart. Still it was feeble, for his speech is, *If Thou canst do any thing*; to which our Lord returns this answer, *If thou canst believe*; showing the necessity of faith. Jesus commanded the evil spirit with more than usual authority, *I charge thee*, and, *Enter into him no more*;



and most reluctantly did he withdraw, leaving him apparently dead, till Jesus took him by the hand.

As soon as they were in private, the Apostles asked the cause of their failure; and He answered in figurative language, that neither this or any other work is impossible to faith. The minutest measure of it will remove a mountain; but as in these latter ages even the largest produces not the wonderful effects which we might expect from His reply, we are led to the conclusion, that the Faith spoken of is not that grace which still remaineth in the Church, *the realising of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, but a persuasion which enabled the possessor to work miracles, which, like the other extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, has been long since withdrawn. It is enumerated among those gifts in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, (xiii.) and is there said, as in this passage, to be capable of removing mountains, and also to be separable from charity, neither of which can be predicated of justifying Faith. Yet still to this *faith which worketh by love* we may apply in a lower sense the promise; for we might enumerate, since miracles have ceased, under the present administration of Divine Providence, the successful establishment of many philanthropical Institutions, which have originated in this principle; such as the Halle Orphan House, which extorted from the unbeliever Frederic of Prussia the confession, that Francke its founder was a great man; and the Society for Propagating the Gospel, which now enjoying the highest Patronage under its present Charter, has supported for near a century and a half, at first alone, the Missionary cause, and has preserved the Episcopacy of North America. Influential and comparatively wealthy, it may be traced up to "an Ordinance of the Commonwealth, 1649, for the promoting and propagating of Christianity;" and the natives of New England, then nearly our only colony, which became dead in law on the Restoration, but was revived in

1662, by a Charter from Charles II. who nominated the pious philosopher Boyle<sup>1</sup> its first Governor. I may appeal also to the now flourishing Missionary associations of our own times, both in the Church and among Dissenters, which have sprung up out of zeal for God's glory, accompanied with an implicit reliance on His cooperation. If we then achieve less than other believers, whose ability or opportunities do not exceed ours, it is because we are *straitened*, not in Him, but *in ourselves*; it is because if we have faith, it is not like theirs vigorous, but weak and wavering. "Pains and prayer through Christ can do any thing," was the declaration of the early Missionary Eliot, on completing his version of the whole Bible into the language of Virginia; which is now more dead than the learned tongues, since there is no one left who understands it. "Attempt great things, expect great things," was the motto of one of our own time, (the late Dr. Carey of Serampore,) who has been the instrument of translating it into Sanscrit and almost all its numerous derivative dialects, and so has rendered the tidings of salvation accessible to millions of Hindu idolaters. Even the heathen Quintilian teaches the same lesson; for he says, speaking of eloquence and the fine arts, (and the observation is still more applicable to the pursuits of the Christian,) that it has sometimes happened that great things have been accomplished by him, who was striving at what was above his power. Our Lord proceeds to say, that prayer and fasting are required for the casting out of all demons; for though this was a case of peculiar malignity, inferior only, if at all, to that of the Gadara demoniac, throwing him from a child into fits, and causing him to pine away, I do not conceive that the language he employs conveys, as the translation does, the idea of different degrees of possession, but that this kind means this race. And we may hence infer the expediency and the efficacy of such exercises

<sup>1</sup> Birch's Life of Robert Boyle, 1744, p. 141.

for the subjection of sinful propensities, and the conquest of evil habits ; since Scripture is not of *private* interpretation, (2 Peter i. 30.) but, independent of its primary meaning, has a secondary application to the circumstances of the believers of all ages.

*77. Jesus procures by a Miracle the Tribute-money for Himself and Peter. Matt. xvii. 24—27.*

As Peter's house at Capernaum was regarded as the residence of Jesus, it was to that disciple that the collectors of the Tribute applied to know if his Master would pay it. Their question shows that it was a voluntary payment ; it therefore could not be a Roman tax, as often represented ; and this also appears from our Saviour's argument, which rests His right of exemption upon His being the Son of the Sovereign for whom it was levied, an argument which could have no weight except from His Divinity. It was, in fact, an annual contribution from all males above twenty years of age towards the expenses of the temple, originating with Moses ; not only raised in Palestine, but remitted also by the Jews who were settled at Rome or in the provinces<sup>m</sup>. It did not, however, cease with the service to support which it was originally levied ; for on the destruction of Jerusalem, the Emperor Vespasian made it compulsory, and transferred it to the temple of Jupiter in the Capitol. Thus the worshipper of Jehovah had to endure the mortification of being taxed for the maintenance of the idolatry of his conquerors. The sum was half a shekel, fifteen-pence of English money, equivalent to the double drachma of the Greek mint ; the Stater, therefore, a coin equal to four drachma, would pay for both Jesus and Peter, but being from its idolatrous symbols profane, it must

<sup>m</sup> This we learn from Cicero, who in his Oration for Flaccus praises that Governor for prohibiting the remittance of it from his Province, and throughout shows his contempt for a state which he stigmatises as " *suspiciosa et maledica*."

be changed into Hebrew money, and this custom gave employment to many money changers.

Jesus first convinced Peter that there was no need that He should pay this contribution, who was greater than the Temple; but He waived His privilege, to prevent the scandal which would have been caused by a refusal, as if He despised the Temple; since He could not assign to others the reason He had given him, without declaring that He was the Son of God, nor could He well withdraw from the engagement made for Him by His disciple. Neither of them owned the small sum required; He therefore ordered His disciple to angle in the lake, telling him that he would find the coin, which would exactly settle the claim upon them both, in the mouth of the first fish which he caught; and by this mode of procuring it, He preserved the dignity which Peter had compromised. By whatever means the stater was there lodged, Omniscience could alone discover it, and Omnipotence secure its being brought to Peter's hook. The voluntary poverty for the benefit of mankind of Him, who might, if He had pleased, have commanded as readily all hidden treasure, ought to excite our admiration and gratitude. Christ teaches us by this example, that when we have not the means of convincing men of a mistake, we ought rather to expose ourselves to some inconvenience, than to suffer them to form an unfavourable opinion of us. But the misconceptions of those who, like the Pharisees, are blinded by malice, He does not endeavour to correct.

78. *The Apostles contend for Preeminence, and are told that it can only be acquired through Humility. Jesus condemns the Bigotry of His disciples, warns them against causing weak believers to stumble, and teaches Forgiveness by a parable. Matt. xviii. Mark ix. 30—50. Luke ix. 46—50.*

Jesus, on their arrival at Capernaum, enquired of His dis-

ciples the subject of their discussion on the road. Shame kept them silent, for they had not been engaged in any edifying conversation, but had disputed concerning their respective claims to preeminence in the kingdom, which they presumed He was about to establish. Had He designed to confer greater authority or higher rank upon Peter than on his brethren, He would surely now have put an end to all such disputes by declaring it; but He decidedly condemned this carnal ambition in them all, speaking to their thoughts and desires, which they ventured to utter not only by words, but also in the manner of the ancient prophets, by a most significant action. Calling them around Him, He placed a little child in the midst, solemnly assuring them, that unless their disposition changed, and they became as such, (as humble and unambitious,) they could not enter into His kingdom; and that their advancement in it would be in proportion to their humility, and to their kindness to their brethren: for he who aspired to be chief, must behave himself as the least, and the servant of all. Some have argued from this speech the perfect innocence of children, in opposition to the doctrine of Original Sin, upon which our Religion rests, and which is so plainly affirmed both in the Old and the New Testament; but comparisons must not be stretched beyond the speaker's intention, and the unbiassed reader will allow that our Lord only meant to notice the quality in which His disciples were deficient, and in which the object of comparison excelled—indifference to distinction. This first dispute concerning preeminence soon followed the Transfiguration, and was probably the consequence of it. The three who had been present might in consequence look forward to some distinction above their brethren, and might therefore take too much upon them; while James, Thaddæus, and Simon the Zelot, might build upon their relationship to their Master.

John then mentioned the case of a man who cast out

demons in the name of Jesus, whom he had forbidden, because he did not, like them, join Him. Jesus, instead of commending, reproved his zeal as mistaken; *Forbid him not; whoever is not against us, is for us*. This admonition teaches us to respect those, who, by their preaching, bring sinners to repentance and faith in Christ, though not sent forth, as we conceive, by the proper authority, and to leave them to pursue their course unmolested, instead of attempting to silence them. God, the Author of the ordinary vocation, acts when He pleases in an extraordinary manner; but this extraordinary call must be ascertained to be authentic by its effects; for this man did not merely call upon demons to leave the possessed, but actually expelled them. Jesus then pronounced a woe upon those who cause weak believers to stumble, declaring that it is better to part with every thing most precious to us, represented under the image of an eye, a hand, and a foot, than to incur eternal punishment<sup>o</sup> by

<sup>o</sup> This doctrine is so odious to the carnal mind, that even divines, well acquainted with the Scriptures, have maintained the final Happiness of all mankind after a sufficient period of suffering. It is easy for ingenious men to render plausible what their readers wish to be true; but in order to convince, they ought to be able to show, that (as poets have feigned, and philosophers have imagined) punishment has a reforming and purifying tendency. The effect I apprehend will be found to be the reverse; and that as the spirits cast down to hell and reserved to judgment, instead of being drawn by their long sufferings to admire the perfections of the Deity, and to grieve that they have disobeyed Him, only hate Him the more for His very excellence; there seems reason to believe that the wicked of our race who shall depart into *the fire prepared for the Devil and his angels*, deprived of restraining grace, and left to themselves and their evil companions, will sink from depth to depth of depravity. But, without engaging in the philosophical question, I observe, that no philological criticism can lower our Saviour's language. It has been attempted to explain *αἰώνιος*, the Greek word we translate *eternal*, as if it did not mean a strict eternity, but a period of long and indefinite duration; but even if this meaning could be established, it is plain that the words of Christ, *unquenchable fire*, declare its eternal continuance; and the refuge of annihilation will not remain, for the doctrine—that though the fire be itself eternal, it will destroy those cast into it—is overturned by the expression, *the worm*

causing others to draw back. Lest pride should tempt them to despise the least of those that believe in Him, however weak their faith, or however great may have been their failings, He declared not only that the most exalted angels disdain not to minister to these little ones, but that the *Son of Man Himself has come to seek and to save that which is lost*; and illustrated His Father's desire for the conversion of sinners by the conduct of a Shepherd, who will leave his flock, to go in search of a single sheep that has strayed.

Having spoken of those who injured their brethren, He treated of the case of those who are injured, and laid down rules for their behaviour, which, if honestly followed, would seldom fail of producing reconciliation. The advantage of agreement He enforced by assuring them, that whenever even two of them should agree in making the same request to His Father, it should be accomplished; for, said He, *wherever two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them*. There cannot be a stronger encouragement to social and family prayer, nor a more effectual admonition to its reverent performance, while it necessarily implies His omnipresence, which cannot be predicated of a creature; and as He spoke to Jews, they must have thus understood Him; for it is a saying among them still, that where ten are assembled to study the Law, there the Deity is present.

*dieth not*; from which we also learn, that, exclusive of eternal sufferings, the damned will have to endure the anguish and gnawing, as it were, of a self-reproaching conscience. The words themselves are borrowed from the conclusion of Isaiah's prophecies, and refer apparently to the two methods by which the dead are disposed of, burning and interment. If eternal punishment be threatened to the impenitent offender, the veracity of God, who cannot lie, and will not change His purpose, assures us, that the threat will be fulfilled; and it follows, that though it be more congenial to the spirit of Christianity to draw men by *the cords of love*, there are some who are to be convinced only *by the terrors of the Lord*. How awful then is the responsibility of those who not only neglect but oppose God's own method of awakening hardened sinners!

The mention of disagreement, led Peter to enquire how often he was bound to forgive an offending brother. Three times was inferred (from Amos i. 3.) by some of the Jewish doctors; but Peter, under the teaching of his heavenly Master, was dissatisfied with this restriction. Still he thought some limitation necessary to guard the doctrine against abuse, and proposed *seven times*, in conformity, it is said, with the opinion of the most liberal of their casuists, and as he might think of Jesus Himself, who on another occasion required a penitent to be forgiven so often; but He now said, *seventy times seven*; and He assigned a reason for such indulgence in a Parable, which shows that this large number is to be taken indefinitely, and that there is no other limit than the disposition of the offender who must sue for forgiveness. The mercy of God and the cruelty of man are then finely contrasted, under the figure of a Sovereign forgiving, on his petition, a debtor who owed him, on the lowest computation<sup>p</sup>, near two millions sterling; the latter, under that of the same debtor, demanding, and in a fierce and brutal manner, of a fellow-slave, about three pounds he owed him, the instant after he had been himself forgiven six hundred thousand times as much<sup>q</sup>. The first, which we may consider as the revenue of a Province, it was impossible to discharge; for none can make satisfaction to God for sin. The latter might have been paid, for our obligations to our fellow men are comparatively small. The Sovereign puts on the appearance of severity, but it is only the appearance; for though he orders him to be imprisoned, and his wife and children to be sold, no sooner does the slave worship him, exclaiming, *Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all*, than he forgives him, though he could not fulfil his promise. The forgiven

P That is, if we reckon by the Greek talent: the Jewish would make it more than double.

<sup>q</sup> Talent, £193 15s. Denarius, 8½d.



debtor is unmoved by the petition of his fellow servant, though urged in his own words, and easy to be accomplished. The other servants are grieved, the master is justly angry, and reproaches him not for his debt, but his want of mercy. His implacability causes his master to revoke his pardon; and we learn out of the mouth of Him who taught us to ask for forgiveness, on the condition of our granting it, that God will never bestow it on the unforgiving. Every reader must perceive the strong opposition between the characters of the merciful lord and the cruel servant, and the amount of their respective debts. It silences whatever justification, or palliation of revenge, can be drawn from the nature or number of the offences committed, or the dignity and merit of the injured party.

79. *Jesus sends forth the Seventy. Luke x. 1—16.*

As Jesus in an earlier period of His ministry had sent forth the Twelve Apostles, He now commissioned Seventy Disciples, in imitation, probably, of the seventy elders appointed by Moses to assist him. The appointment is recorded only by St. Luke; but the tradition that he was himself one of them is probably not true; since the preface to his Gospel seems to declare, that he did not write from personal knowledge. The twelve had been allowed to go where they pleased, provided they confined their ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; but these were sent in pairs to prepare for their Master in the several places He intended to visit on His way to Jerusalem. Both commissions were ushered in with the remark, that the Harvest was plenteous, but the Labourers few; and the instruction was nearly the same; only the Seventy, as the time assigned to them was short, were not to waste it by saluting any on the way. Their commission also, unlike that of the Twelve, was temporary; but as the Temple service was divided between Priests and Levites, under the

superintendence of one High Priest, so here the Ministry of the Church seems to be set forth under two divisions, the one subordinate to the other. The Acts and the Epistles show us the Orders of Priests and Deacons expressly established; while it appears from those to Timothy and Titus, that the Apostles limited to themselves and those they specially selected, though not without the sanction of the Congregation, the keeping up of the body by Ordination. In one most important point the Christian Ministry differs from the Jewish Priesthood. The bond of Jewish unity was a Priest, who presided over a system of sacrifices which were continually offered from year to year. The bond of Christian unity is the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, whose *one sacrifice of Himself perfected for ever them that are sanctified*. Their principle of unity was visible and material, ours invisible and spiritual. The remark unhappily cannot be extended to Romanists, as in their Pope or Father they acknowledge a visible universal Governor of the Church, who while he claims an Aaronitic Priesthood, assumes the pagan title of Supreme Pontiff.

80. *Jesus attends the Feast of Tabernacles, and teaches in the Temple. John vii.*

Jesus had not visited Jerusalem for eighteen months<sup>r</sup>; and some of His brethren, who did not as yet believe in Him, taunted Him with His continued absence, and His preaching and performing miracles in places of comparative obscurity. Another opportunity of visiting the capital was offered by the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus would not accompany them, that He might not give needless offence by the attendance of a multitude of followers, but He went up, *as it were in secret*, neither preaching, nor working miracles by the way. About

<sup>r</sup> In this and in the other portions of St. John's Gospel I have derived much instruction from the translation of Tittmann's Commentary.

the middle of the feast He entered the Temple, and taught. The leading persons enquired with a mixture of surprise and contempt, how He had attained sufficient knowledge of the Law to qualify Him for a public instructor, since He had not received a liberal education. He replied, that His doctrine was not His own, as men acquire knowledge by study, but a message which He was commissioned to deliver, and that the preparation of the mind for receiving it consisted (not in abilities or learning, but) in a desire to do the will of Him that sent Him; so that every one that was thus inclined, would be enabled to form a just opinion of His pretensions. He added, as a criterion, that the teacher who comes forward of his own accord, in one form or other pursues his own interest; whereas he who disregards self, and seeks only God's glory, proves himself to be in reality, what he claims to be, God's messenger. He exposed their insincerity by observing, that none of them kept the Law for which they affected so much zeal; and that they were even then meditating a flagrant breach of it,—*Why go ye about to kill Me?* Their motive was, His having broken the Sabbath, on His last visit to Jerusalem, by healing the cripple at Bethesda. He required them to judge fairly, and if they did not scruple to dispense with the Sabbath that they might perform the act of circumcising, not to condemn Him for restoring on that day a man to the use of his limbs. The argument appears to have had its proper effect upon the more candid. Some even ventured to think, as He spake so boldly, and was not opposed by the rulers, that even they might believe Him to be the Messiah. Others doubted, because they supposed they knew whence Jesus was, and they had been taught that *when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is*. The remark surprises us, because the priests, of whom king Herod enquired the place of His birth, answered without hesitation; and in the course of the next

conversation some recollected that the Scripture said, that *He cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem.* The *whence* then must mean, not from what town, but what parents; and this answer seems to say, You know my reputed father, but you know not my real one. *Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, whom ye know not.* Alarmed at His increasing popularity, as many seemed disposed to acknowledge Him, saying, *Can the Messiah do greater miracles?* the Pharisees and chief-priests now made their first attempt to apprehend Him; but unintimidated, He continued to speak, obscurely intimating His approaching decease, telling them that He was yet to stay a little longer with them, and that then He should go to Him who had sent Him; and they would seek Him, but in vain, for where He should be, they would not be able to come. Not understanding Him, they asked if He would visit their countrymen dispersed among the Gentiles, and even teach the Gentiles themselves. The arrival of the officers probably ended the discourse.

Undaunted, on the last the greatest day of the festival, Jesus again came forward, and more explicitly declared Himself, inviting, by an allusion to Isaiah's prophecy, *Come ye to the waters*, every one that thirsted to come unto Him and drink, describing Himself as the Fountain of living water, in opposition to the cisterns provided by men. We are informed, that this is a reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit; and His words, *he that believeth on Me as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*, teach us, that it will not only be communicated to satisfy the believer's own thirst for spiritual blessings, but will be, as He told the woman of Samaria, a spring within him, whence streams will flow for the cleansing and refreshing of others. The reference is general, it is therefore impossible to know

to what text He referred; but there are several passages in the Prophets which convey the same meaning, though not in the same terms. His words derive a peculiar energy from the occasion upon which they were spoken; for upon this day it was the custom to fetch water from the spring Siloam, which issued from a rock under the Temple; some of which was drunk with joyful acclamations, while the rest was poured over the evening sacrifice, the people singing, from Isaiah xii. 3. *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* This was said to be done in remembrance of the miracle by which the thirst of their forefathers in the desert was relieved; and it was brought as a drink offering to supplicate for rain against the approaching seed time. The Jews also allow that it is emblematical of the Holy Spirit; so that their ancestors could hardly have misunderstood Jesus. The people were divided in their opinion; some maintained that He was the Prophet who was expected as the Messiah's harbinger, and some that He was the Messiah Himself. Others asserted, that as the Messiah was to spring from David, and to be born at Bethlehem, it was impossible that this Galilean could be He; so ignorant were they of the lineage and birthplace of Jesus. The officers themselves were too much impressed with what He had spoken to seize Him; and Nicodemus ventured to suggest, that a man ought not to be condemned without a trial: so they all withdrew to their own homes, without coming to any determination, and Jesus retired to the Mount of Olives.

18. *A woman<sup>r</sup>, taken in an act of Adultery, is brought before Jesus, who declines to condemn her as a Judge, but as a Teacher admonishes her to sin no more. John viii. 1—11.*

The enemies of Jesus, having failed in their late attempt to take Him by force, concerted a specious plan to ensnare Him ; and accordingly very early the next morning, when He had returned to teach, they brought in an Adulteress, whose guilt was undeniable, since she had been taken in the very act, committed perhaps in some apartment of the Temple, which on this festival used to be turned into a scene of revelry. They observed, that Moses had commanded that such offenders should be stoned, and desired to have His decision. Their question was a dilemma, from which there seemed to be no escape. Had He ordered them to put the Law in force, they would have accused Him to the Governor of assuming independent authority ; and if He had referred them to his tribunal, they would have represented Him to the People as a partisan of Rome, a betrayer of their liberties, and a despiser of their lawgiver. To show His unwillingness to interfere, He stooped down, and wrote with his finger on the ground, as was the custom of the Rabbis, when they did not choose to be disturbed. As, however, they would take no denial, He unmasked them by saying, *Let him among you who is without sin cast the first stone* ; intimating that they themselves were

† I have observed in the Introduction, that this Narrative has been from an early age suspected of being an interpolation. It certainly is not noticed by the Greek commentators ; it does not appear in the principal ancient versions, and the text differs very greatly in its readings in the MSS. which preserve it. Modern critics endeavour to show, that the style is unlike that of St. John ; and yet even these, as Tittmann and Tholuck, are satisfied that it is not an invention, but a genuine tradition, which, being written on the margin, was transferred afterwards to the text ; and the latter allows that the spirit of it is in perfect harmony with the essence of Christianity.

guilty of the very sin for which they brought the woman to be judged; for so we must understand *ἀναμάρτητος*, *He who is without that sin*; for none avowedly are without sin of any kind; nor would a general charge come so powerfully home to the conscience. It was, as Jesus complained on another occasion, both literally and figuratively, *an adulterous generation*; and this interpretation is confirmed by the fact, if it be truly reported, that adultery was then so common, that the practice of trying by the waters of jealousy women suspected of it had been abolished; the trial according to the rabbinical comment being only effectual, when the husband was innocent. It was customary when criminals were put to death for the witness to cast the first stone. He then stooped down to write a second time, perhaps to show that He had dismissed the case, and thus gave them an opportunity of withdrawing, *and they all*, convicted by their conscience, *went out one by one*. Their scheme failed, and their hypocrisy was exposed. With consummate wisdom, He thus defeated their malice, without seeming to know it; and as He had before refused to divide an inheritance between two brothers, (Luke xii. 14.) so now He evaded the office of a Judge, which they would have thrust upon Him, without losing sight of the Moralist; *Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more*. The accusers had disappeared, and no trial could take place; but in dismissing her, He both showed that He knew her guilt, and exhorted her to amend her conduct; as Augustine says, He did condemn, but it was the sin, not the sinner.

82. *The discourse, in which Jesus declares His existence before the birth of Abraham, is abruptly terminated by an attempt of His auditors to stone Him. John viii. 12—59.*

Jesus is said to have been *left alone, and the woman standing in the midst*. The people therefore remained, and as He had

been teaching, He resumed after this interruption His discourse. The sun probably then rising, He drew His imagery from that luminary of the material creation, and told them, that He Himself was the *Light of the world*, who not only enlighteneth, but giveth life, intimating that in due time it will not only shine upon Israel, but upon all nations.

The Pharisees objected, that as He bore witness to Himself, His witness was not to be received. He replied, that it was valid, because He knew the nature of His mission, which they from their prejudices were not able to comprehend; and He added, (as He had told them before,) that He had moreover His Father's witness to the fact of His being the Light of the world, which with His own was, according to the decision of their own Law, sufficient. He warned them of the consequences of their rejection of Him, *Ye shall die in your sins, if ye believe not that I am [He.]* They asked in return, seeking rather grounds of accusation, than wishing to ascertain the truth, Who He is? and He answered, *The same as I said unto you from the beginning* (of the discourse), *the Light of the world*. Alluding obscurely to the mode in which they shall put Him to death, He affirmed, *When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then ye shall know that I am [He.]* In both passages, *He* is the addition of the Translators, and is, I apprehend, correct, for *He*, though meaning the Messiah, is ambiguous; and had His speech not been ambiguous, they would not in return have asked, *Who art Thou?* He replied, *The Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him*, being faithful to His commission. Many, in consequence of these words, believed on Him; and to encourage them He replied, that if they continued in this belief, they would know the Truth, and the Truth would make them free. They—I suppose others of his auditors—mistaking the moral bondage of which He spake for political, angrily yet falsely answered, that they were the *seed of Abraham, and were never in bondage*. He allowed that they were descendants of



Abraham, and yet not properly his seed, nor the sons of God, for if they had been Abraham's children, they would have imitated his conduct; if God were their Father, they would love Him, as He came from God. He added, that they cannot convict Him of sin, [that is, of falsehood,] and yet they will not believe on Him, because they are not of God. This provoked them to call Him a Samaritan and a Demoniac; but He calmly denied the charge, and said, *but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour Me*. He told them, that their works show that they are the children of another father, the Devil, a manslayer from the beginning, and a liar. *Verily, verily*, He continued, *I say unto you, If a man keepeth my saying, he shall never see death*; meaning the second death, which alone deserves the name, eternal misery in the unseen world. The doctrine was known to them, but they misrepresented His meaning, and exclaimed, *Now we know that Thou art possessed by a demon. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? Whom makest Thou Thyself?* Their question drew forth His memorable declaration, *Abraham longed<sup>r</sup> to see my day; he saw it, and was glad*; confirmed and explained by His reply to the question which it provoked, *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Verily, verily, before Abraham was, I am*. Anti-trinitarians tell us, that this means He was designated to His office before the existence of Abraham; a proposition not worth announcing with such solemnity, and which could not have given offence; but the attempt of the Jews to stone Him as a Blasphemer for this speech, which He did not explain away, sufficiently proves that they understood Him, and that He meant them to understand Him, to speak of His personal existence before that of the father of their nation, and consequently of His Divinity. Commentators in general maintain, that our Lord here assumes the title by which the Deity

<sup>r</sup> rejoiced, A. T.

announced Himself to Moses, *I am that I am*; but the opinion appears to be erroneous, for on no other occasion did He make so positive a declaration to His enemies; and I do not see why the ellipsis should not be filled up with *He*, as in the two preceding passages of this same discourse, and then His Divinity, though not affirmed, is implied, in *I am*; for if His existence was to be measured by time, as that of all created beings, He would have said *I was*, but His existence is one eternal *now*. If it be asked, when Abraham saw the day of Christ? we answer, when by faith he offered up his son, and received him back again, ἐν παραβολῇ, (Heb. xi. 19.) in a figure, which visibly represented to his senses the death and the resurrection of the victim, which Jehovah would provide for the sins of the world. Their fury terminated the discourse abruptly, for *they took up stones to cast at Him*. He eluded their malice, passing through the midst of them, rendering Himself, it is supposed, invisible.

83. *Jesus restores the sight of a man born Blind.* John ix. x.

On leaving the Temple, the attention of Jesus was drawn to a beggar, by the question of His Apostles, whether his being born blind was owing to his own sin, or to that of his parents. The first supposition is explained by some, as a reference to his conduct in a former state of existence, as we are told that the Pharisees believed in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. By others, from an opinion derived from the struggle between Esau and Jacob, that an infant could sin before its birth. Our Lord by His reply discountenanced either alternative; declaring that it was for the purpose of manifesting the power of God. His addition, that He must work the works of Him that sent Him while it was day, implied that the peril from which He had just escaped, and to which He would again expose Himself,

should not deter Him from running His appointed course. Accordingly He cured him, and as in the case of the former blind man, by the intervention of natural means, though they could have no other efficacy than what He was pleased to give them. He anointed his eyes with earth made out of His own saliva, and sent him to wash it off in the water of Siloam, (that is, *Sent*,) that well of salvation, to which He had referred at the feast of Tabernacles; which seems to be typical of Himself, who was sent by God. The beggar was directed there probably both to try his own faith, and to draw the attention of others to the miracle. None is more important, unless it be the resurrection of Lazarus, for it shows the fruitless attempt of the Rulers to disprove it, and the gradual growth of faith in the subject of it, who began with declaring Jesus to be a prophet, unintimidated by their questioning, and ended with acknowledging Him to be the Messiah. He was brought by his neighbours before the Council, who were divided; but the majority did not believe the fact, treating it as a collusion, till they had examined his parents, who declared his former blindness, but out of fear gave no opinion, referring to their son as of age to answer for himself; for it had been already decreed, that if any man did confess that He was *the Christ*, *he should be put out of the synagogue*. The Council again called in the man, and said, *Give God the praise, we know that this Man is a sinner*. The advice may mean, Thank God for the recovery of thy sight, though it cannot be ascribed to the agency of one who is a sinner; but the answer, *Whether He be a sinner or not, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see*, favours the interpretation of its being an exhortation to him to confess the deception, in the words in which Joshua (vii. 19.) called upon Achan to acknowledge his

\* This pool is a considerable reservoir in the valley of Jehoshaphat, supplied with water by a subterranean channel, from another of much smaller dimensions, called the Fountain of the Virgin, a quarter of a mile above.

guilt. They again attempted to confute him; but he whose faith had procured him sight, not satisfied with acknowledging the fact, stood forth as the defender of his Benefactor's moral character when his parents were overawed, declaring that He could not be a sinner whom God had enabled to perform such a miracle as had never been accomplished before *since the world began*; and that if He were not of God, *He could do nothing*. Disappointed in their hope of convicting him of imposture, or at least of silencing him, in their resentment they excommunicated him, and thus deprived him of any hopes of alms; but Jesus would not suffer the honesty of this first sufferer in His cause to lose its reward. Finding him afterwards, He asked if he believed in the Son of God; and to his reply, *Who is He, Lord, that I might believe in Him?* answered by revealing Himself to him without any reserve. The beggar declared his belief, and worshipped Him. Upon this Jesus observed, *I am come into this world for judgment, that those who see not might see, and that those who see might be made blind*. This judicial blindness, as He declared to some of the Pharisees who were present, and arrogantly asked if they were blind also, arose, not from an incapacity of seeing, but from their wilful closing of their eyes. *Now ye say we see, therefore your sin remaineth*.

The Sanhedrim had presumed to declare Jesus to be a sinner, that is, an impostor; He therefore went on to show, (for I consider the following chapter to be a continuation of the same discourse,) that these His calumniators were unworthy of the name of shepherds, that they were, in fact, thieves and robbers, and that He alone was *the good Shepherd*, and that *the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep*. He represented Himself also as the gate of a sheepfold, which in those countries, where it is necessary to take precautions against wild beasts, is of a more substantial nature than with us; and as it was through the *door* that the *shepherd entereth*,

while they that came *but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy, climb up* over the fence; so He was the only entrance into the Church, and those who entered through Him should *be preserved, and find pasture*. He then reverted to the figure of the shepherd, who is the owner of the sheep, and contrasted His own readiness to *lay down His life for them*, with the cowardice and selfishness of *the hireling*, who flees in the hour of danger, and leaves his sheep a prey when *he seeth the wolf coming, because he is an hireling*. The Saviour declared His determination to die for the sheep; and obscurely intimated the conversion of the Gentiles, saying, that He has *other sheep* whom *He must bring*, who also *shall hear His voice*, and that both shall be united into *one fold* under Him, the *one Shepherd*. In the East, the shepherd is a character of higher moral dignity than with us: there, instead of following, he walks before the sheep, to see if they may venture forth; he protects, and is ready to risk life for them; and his care is repaid by a corresponding attachment on their part. As here described, he knows them individually, *calling his own sheep by name*<sup>t</sup>, and they *acknowledge his voice*, and *follow* at his call. When therefore Jesus says, *I am the good Shepherd*, to feel at all the force of the comparison, we must take these circumstances into consideration: but even then our conception of His character will be far short of the truth, since a reference to the image in the Old Testament will raise us

<sup>t</sup> A striking illustration of this language is afforded by Polybius, (xii.) who tells us, that "when strangers land in Corsica, the swine immediately run away, and flock to the sound of the horn blown by their keepers, who, instead of following their herds like the Greeks, go before them to some distance." We know that the good Shepherd was a favourite emblem with the early Christians, from its frequent occurrence on their sepulchral monuments in the Roman Catacombs. It was the custom in Greece for shepherds to give names to their sheep; (Longus iv.) and we learn from Mr. Hartley that it still prevails, for on desiring one of them to call a sheep, on his doing so it ran up to him with apparent pleasure; and he told him that many of them were still wild, and had not yet learned their names. *Researches in Greece*, p. 321.

above all created objects, even to the Deity Himself, for we there shall discover that the good Shepherd is no other than Jehovah. *Behold*, says Isaiah, (chap. xl. 10, 11.) *the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him : He shall feed His flock like a shepherd : He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead them that are with young.* And Jehovah Himself says by the mouth of Ezekiel, *Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out ; I will feed them in a good pasture, I will feed my flock, and cause them to lie down.* (xxxiv. 11, 13. 15) Our Lord seems to intimate this important truth, when He calls the sheep *His own*. The church which He [God] *has purchased with His own blood*, (Acts xx. 17.) is called in Scripture *His flock* ; and Pastor is one of the titles of His ministers when considered as rulers of His people, from whom He is distinguished by St. Paul as the *Great Shepherd*, (Heb. xiii. 20.) and by St. Peter (v. 4.) as the *Chief Shepherd*. He declared that His Father loved Him, because He would lay down His life ; and adds that no one can force it from Him, and that He hath power to take it again. The result of the discourse is a division ; but those who asked if a demoniac can open the eyes of a blind man, for the time prevailed.

#### 84. *The Seventy disciples return.* Luke x. 17—20.

The Seventy disciples returned, exulting in their power over evil Spirits, which exceeded their expectations, as only the cure of diseases was comprehended in their commission. Their Master then enlarged it, by subjecting to them *all the power of the enemy*, but took the opportunity of directing their joy and thankfulness to a privilege which far more deserved it, the fact that their *names were written in heaven*. In the sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 22.) He had warned them, that many who have even cast out demons in His name shall

be rejected at the last day. How far more precious then is grace than gifts! Talents and learning in our age answer the same end as miraculous powers did then; they avail to the edification of others, but do nothing towards our own salvation. How awful the state, and how bitter will be the self-reproach, of all, who, after they have been the means of saving others, shall be themselves cast away! Anticipating the fall of Satan from heaven, He expressed His thanksgiving as on the return of the Twelve, declaring that all things had been committed to Him by His Father, and that they were highly favoured in being permitted to hear doctrines and see miracles which kings and prophets had in vain longed to witness. The result of their mission must have been satisfactory, since it drew from our Saviour this acknowledgment; *I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things*—the truths they had though imperfectly proclaimed—from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes: thanking Him (I conceive according to the Hebrew idiom) not that these truths were rejected by the former, but that they were accepted by the latter. To the former, the intelligent of this world, whether in higher or lower life, who were disposed to cavil, and expected *signs*, and *wisdom*, their teaching, though it could not comprehend, as afterwards, the scandal of the cross, proved a *stumbling-block* and *foolishness*; while the latter, teachable and humble, would be taught by God, and find it to be *His power and wisdom unto salvation*. The same burst of gratitude is recorded by St. Matthew, when Jesus invites the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him for Refreshment: and Harmonists in general assume, that though He thought fit to introduce them in that connection, they were spoken only on the return of the Seventy. I agree with those who regard the miracles, reported by more than one Evangelist, when they differ only in circumstances, to be the same, but I see no reason to apply the rule to words,

especially short sayings, which there might have been a propriety in repeating on several occasions. We have read that the appointment of the Twelve and of the Seventy was introduced by the same appropriate remark, that *the Harvest was plenteous, but the labourers few*; and we may reasonably suppose, that this thanksgiving, and also the denunciation of a heavier judgment upon Chorazin and Bethsaida than upon Tyre and Sidon, and upon Capernaum than upon Sodom, were twice uttered.

85. *A Lawyer is taught the extent of his duty to his neighbour, by the example of a benevolent Samaritan. Luke x. 25—37.*

As Jesus was teaching, a Lawyer, with the design of tempting Him, asked Him what he should do in order to obtain eternal life. He referred him to the Law, of which he was an expounder, to find an answer for himself, and on his quoting the two leading precepts of Love to God and Love to his Neighbour, which are an epitome of our duty, the same reply which our Lord Himself had before given, He allowed that he had answered correctly, and had only to fulfil it and live. He who loves God at all times with all his capability of heart and mind, and every man with whom he has any concern as himself, has kept the Law, and instead of coming to his Creator as a suppliant for Mercy, may appeal to His Justice for a recompense. But who of the fallen sons of Adam will presume to rest his hope of acceptance upon this covenant of works? If any one could in his own strength keep the whole moral law, having no sins that require expiation, the precious blood of the incarnate Son of God need not to have been shed for him. The mere statement of such a supposition confutes it. It is plain, therefore, that our Saviour's intention was to lead this lawyer to a discovery of the extent of the Law which must be made known to him, before he



could feel his want of a more complete righteousness than his own: and it should seem that he suspected his design, from the remark of the Evangelist, *seeking to justify himself*. Accordingly he asked who was his Neighbour, passing over his duty to God, from the consciousness perhaps that his performance of that would less bear a scrutiny. The Israelites, with the advantage of a revealed Law which breathes the spirit of benevolence, and expressly inculcates the relief of the stranger, had so narrowed their definition of Neighbour, as to exclude from it all but their countrymen; while the Roman Dramatist, with no more than the light of nature, could perceive, that no human being ought to be indifferent to man. Jesus did not point out how imperfectly the Jews acted up to the commandment, even within the pale which they had drawn round it; nor did He even directly answer the question, but he showed how a man of benevolence would have answered it, by relating what is called the Parable of the good Samaritan. There is however no reason why it should not have been a real Narrative; and certainly if considered not only as what ought to be done, but as what had been done, it is much more impressive both as an example and as a reproof. He described a Traveller stripped and wounded, lying half dead upon the road between Jerusalem and Jericho, which was infested by *Robbers*<sup>o</sup>. Three persons are brought forward, a Priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan; the two former with peculiar propriety, as it was a city where many of them were stationed with a view to their Temple service: the first two, honourable in the eyes of his auditors; the last, despicable. From the Priest and the Levite, as teachers of the Law and ministers of religion, they might have expected the performance of one of its plainest precepts; but the first would not even look upon his suffering countryman; the second came up to him, but, whether from indiffer-

<sup>o</sup> *λησται*, not thieves.

ence or fear of the robbers, left him without aiding him, and also pursued his way: while this excommunicated and abhorred alien, from whom a Jew would anticipate neither pity nor assistance, and whom in distress he would himself have disregarded, alone fulfilled the commandment, by doing as he would be done by. He treated the unfortunate traveller according to the approved method of the times<sup>p</sup>, by pouring into his wounds the oil and wine which he had provided for his own use; he underwent fatigue, and exposed himself to danger, by dismounting to set him upon his beast, and took care of him at the inn; leaving with the host two denarii, fifteen of our pence, (about the pay of a soldier and a labourer<sup>q</sup> for two days,) which might be all the money he had. Nor was he content to trust to the benevolence of the host, but promised, if the sum was not enough, on his return to make up the deficiency. Had their situations been reversed, and a Jew been introduced as relieving a distressed Samaritan, prejudice might have prevented the lawyer's cordial approbation of this act of charity; but as the sufferer was his countryman, his sympathy was awakened, and Jesus drew from him an acknowledgment, that this despised stranger had acted like a neighbour, while both Levite and Priest had failed in their duty. Thus he made him teach himself, that in this instance which he himself had chosen, the demand of the law was more extensive than he had imagined. His object was to show the nature and the extent of Beneficence, and that our relief of the distressed should be as complete as is in our power, universal, and not limited to our own countrymen

<sup>p</sup> The treating wounds with oil, and that poured in hot, in consequence of which the majority of those wounded by gun shots died, prevailed universally in the European armies, till superseded by Ambrose Parée, that distinguished French Surgeon to the French kings, who being a Protestant would have perished in the St. Bartholomew's massacre, had he not been saved from it by the contrivance of Charles IX. himself.

<sup>q</sup> Matt. xx. 2. Tacitus, A. 1—17.

or to the members of our own Church. The lesson is a most valuable one, and has no doubt been efficacious both in enlarging charity and repressing bigotry: yet many expositors, from the Fathers to the Moderns, not content with the obvious instruction, seek in this and in other parables, a recondite meaning. They take the good Samaritan for a figurative representation of our Lord Himself, and the Traveller for Human Nature wounded by Sin, whom the Law would not relieve, and who must perish without the Gospel. This is an allegory which piety can render edifying, as may be seen in a sermon on the subject by Bishop Horne, but it does not follow that it was designed; and when I consider the difficulty of spiritualizing the pence and the far-fetched application of other circumstances, I am disposed to regard it not as an interpretation, but as an ingenious accommodation. Such a kind of exposition, unless guarded as such, appears to me most objectionable, not only as precarious and liable to abuse, but as perplexing the reader with an additional meaning, which will end in rendering Scripture doubtful, and so depriving it of its authority as a rule. It has a tendency to draw us off from practical precepts to articles of faith, which are taught with more certainty in other passages, and a lively fancy may also mislead this class of interpreters, and so error be received which without this sanction would be rejected. And this very narrative is a memorable instance that the evil is not imaginary, for from it has been derived the tenet as well as the name of Supererogation. According to Roman Catholic divines, the Samaritan, in bringing the stranger to the inn and giving the two pence, had fully discharged his duty; he therefore did more than he was bound to do in promising to pay his future expenses; and as his speech, *Προσδαπάνησεις*, *What thou shalt expend more*, is rendered in the Latin Testament *Supererogaveris*, his voluntary unrequired bounty obtained the name of Supererogation. The notion that man, who has nothing but what he has received from his Creator,

can do more than his duty, is so preposterous, that it seems to one who hears it for the first time impossible that it could have been ever seriously entertained; and perhaps it might never have prevailed, unless it had been first recommended as an interpretation of Scripture.

86. *Jesus again teaches His Disciples to pray, and illustrates by a parable the efficacy of persevering prayer. Luke xi. 1—13.*

The Disciples having again requested Jesus to teach them how to pray, He gave them that well-known form which from this circumstance is denominated the Lord's Prayer. It is recorded both here by St. Luke, and by St. Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the opinion of most Harmonists was given on two occasions. According to the former, it was certainly given as a form to be used; and perhaps, *Pray after this manner*, οὕτως, the direction in the first Gospel, may convey the same meaning, though it is taken by others, according to the English idiom, as a model to direct us in forming our petitions. The use of the plural number shows that it is designed for social worship, and the Church from the beginning universally introduced it into its Liturgies; but the superstitious abuse of it by Roman Catholics, who repeated it rather as a charm than as a statement of their wants and desires, has driven many Protestants into the opposite extreme; so that though permitted by the Catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, it has only been used of late in the Kirk of Scotland, or by the majority of English dissenters. A great ornament of that body, the amiable and candid Doddridge, exclaims in his Family Expositor, "Excellent is this form of sound and divine words, which our great Master here recommends. God forbid that any of His followers should censure their brethren who think it still proper to use it, not only as a directory, but as

a form too." And we may add, Let us, in whose formularies it so frequently recurs, beware lest we suffer it to sink into a lifeless form; and let us attentively study it, that our thoughts and our desires may go along with its petitions. Some even of our own communion object, that it is repeated too often in our Prayer Book. The fault, if it be one, is not to be ascribed to those who compiled it, but to those who have united together three Services originally distinct: and in these it recurs only on a break in our devotions, as after the second Lesson, and after partaking of the Sacrament, upon the principle that we should never pray without introducing it. On comparing the two copies, we find these variations; St. Matthew has *this day*; St. Luke, *day by day*; and he substitutes *sin* for *debt*, as more intelligible to Gentiles. The meaning also is varied; the former puts it as a condition, *Forgive us as we forgive*; the latter states it as a reason, *For we forgive*. Luke omits the Doxology; which some critics suppose was not in the original text of Matthew, but an interpolation from an early Liturgy. It is found in the Syriac version, but does not appear in some of the best Greek manuscripts, or in the Vulgate. Accordingly it is not introduced into the Roman Liturgy, and appears only when that Prayer first occurs in that portion of our daily service that has been derived from a Protestant<sup>a</sup> source, and after the reception of the Eucharist. It seems, however, a most appropriate termination, since it assigns the reason for prayer, the ability of God to grant it, and suits the last petition, deliverance from the evil Spirit.

Our Saviour in this Prayer most impressively teaches, that the Glory of God, whom He authorizes us to address as

<sup>a</sup> The opening of the Service, that is, the Sentences and Confession and Absolution, was added in King Edward's second book. The idea was taken from Calvin's Liturgy, but was immediately borrowed from that published the year before by Polanus, the Minister of some refugee German clothiers, who were settled by the Duke of Somerset at Glastonbury.

a Parent, should be dearer to us even than necessary food; for as in the Sermon on the Mount, when exhorting His disciples to seek the reign of God and His righteousness in the first place, He assures them, that whatever is necessary for their bodily wants shall be added to them; so here He does not permit them to ask even for *daily*, or *sufficient*<sup>r</sup>, Bread, till they have prayed that His Name may be sanctified, the Reign of His Grace be universally established, and His Will accomplished by men with the same willingness as by angels. The latter petition is too often taken only passively, and offered up as a petition for resignation under distressing, though fatherly, chastisements, as if it were equivalent to our Lord's personal supplication, *Father, not My will, but Thine be done*. But this, though included in the petition, is far from exhausting it; since it also expresses a desire, that all the faculties and means possessed by men should be actively engaged for the accomplishing the purposes of God with as much alacrity, as is done by those perfect intelligences that *excel in strength, and fulfil His commandment*. The first three petitions are for the promotion of the glory of God; the others for ourselves, for necessary daily Maintenance, for Forgiveness, on the express condition of our forgiving, and for Preservation from Temptation or Trial, and Deliverance in it from Sin, or rather from the Devil, the instigator to sin: for the original word, which may be rendered either *evil*, or the *evil Being*, in this connection best suits the latter. The Prayer is concluded with a Doxology, in which we declare our con-

<sup>r</sup> *Daily*, in connection with *this day*, seems to add little force as an epithet to Bread. It is, as all know, our version of *ἐπιούσιον*, which occurs no where else, and is rendered *quotidianum* in the old Italic, but literally by Jerome *supersubstantialem*; a word probably invented by him for the purpose, which seems to mean *sufficient*, and appears to me to give the true sense, which is thus equivalent to Agur's petition, *Feed me with bread convenient for me*. (Prov. xxx. 8.) Others render it *to-morrow's bread*; but though this may be in a degree supported by St. Luke's *day by day*, it does not seem in harmony with the precept, *Take no thought for the morrow*.

viction that our heavenly Father is able to grant our requests, as we ascribe to Him *the kingdom, and the power, and the glory*. We previously pray that His kingdom or reign may come; it is clear then that the word is here used in a different sense; there it means the kingdom of His Grace, that is, His sovereignty over His people; here, that of His Providence, by which He governs all things and persons, and makes even His enemies subservient to His pleasure. Having taught His disciples how to pray, He encourages them by the example of others to persevere in the duty, and not to give it up because their request is not immediately granted, showing, first by a Parable, the success of importunity, in extorting a loan of food from a reluctant friend; and secondly, by arguing *à fortiori*, that if an earthly father will not disappoint his son's reasonable request, though he be comparatively wicked, much more will their heavenly and perfect Parent grant to them that ask Him the *Holy Spirit*<sup>s</sup>, the desire of whose blessed influence He has Himself excited in them. This importunity or shamelessness is a comment upon our Lord's declaration, that *the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*. As the petition is for another's benefit, it particularly encourages intercessory prayer, and its efficiency is shown by the friend not sending one of his household, but coming himself, and giving not only what was asked, but as much as was needed.

87. *Jesus makes straight on a sabbath-day a Woman who had been bowed together for eighteen years.* Luke xiii. 10—17.

We have now another miracle recorded, performed in a Synagogue on the sabbath day; and the same objection,

<sup>s</sup> In the corresponding verse, (Matt. vii. 11.) it is *δῶμα ἀγαθὰ*, *good gifts*, which shows how one Evangelist can be made the interpreter of another.

raised by His opponents as on a former occasion, is silenced in the same manner by an appeal to their own practice. *Thou hypocrite*, replied Jesus, marking thereby the character of the ruler of the synagogue, *doth not each of you loose his ass or bull, and lead it away to watering on the sabbath-day?* Now this was attended with some labour, and was only done to preserve an animal from the uneasiness of thirst; could it then be a question with them, whether or not it was fit on that day to loose from an infirmity of eighteen years' standing a daughter of Abraham? We may presume, that the phrase was chosen to intimate, that she was not only, like them all, a descendant from the patriarch, but also a partaker of his faith. His answer shamed His adversaries into silence, but the multitude rejoiced in His glorious displays of power. The ruler had exclaimed with indignation, that the sick ought to come on the week days to be healed; but we have no reason to suppose that this woman came for that purpose; she came, we may presume, to worship God, which, to her who was bowed almost double, must have been a self-denying labour; and while she was seeking spiritual improvement, it pleased her compassionate Saviour to restore her body to straightness and vigour. The objection of the ruler was most unreasonable; for to establish against Jesus the charge of breaking the sabbath, he must have interpreted His laying of hands upon the woman as a work.

88. *The reply of Jesus to the question, Are there few that are saved? and His declaration, that He should be put to death in Jerusalem. Luke xiii. 23—35.*

As Jesus was travelling, He was asked if the number of the saved would be few: and, according to His custom, He availed Himself of the question, to introduce a profitable conversation. Without satisfying an idle curiosity as to others, He exhorted



them to secure their own entrance into heaven, telling them, that many would in vain seek admission, and that they must strive, that is, make every effort, and force, as it were, a passage through the narrow gate. Thus we learn from the highest authority, what yet few seem disposed to attend to, that notwithstanding conviction, temporary earnestness, and partial reformation, many will at last come short of salvation. The causes of failure are as various as the temptations that beset us ; but none but procrastination is fatal ; for no one will be rejected that applies while opportunity is afforded, or (as it is figuratively expressed) *till the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door*. But as the hour of death is unknown to us, and ill adapted for the business of preparing for eternity, we should, instead of abusing mercy, and despising the *long-suffering of God, which leadeth to repentance*, act upon our Lord's advice in another place : *Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh*. And if He should not come in our day, He will call us out of the world by death, and our departure to Him will be practically the same as His advent to us. Our Lord here so expresses Himself, as to teach, that many Jews, who thought their admission into the kingdom of God certain, would be rejected, as workers of iniquity, while Gentiles from every land should sit down with their father Abraham, and those of his descendants who were worthy, as Isaac, Jacob, and the Prophets.

Jesus was still within Galilee, Herod's jurisdiction, and was warned by certain of the Pharisees to depart, because that Sovereign was desirous of killing Him. Their motive does not appear ; but their advice was not followed. He told them to inform the Tetrarch, who perhaps only wished to frighten Him to a distance, and whose craft He designates by calling him a Fox, that He should proceed in His active course of beneficence for His appointed time ; and that when

that was finished, He should be put to death, not in his dominions, but in Jerusalem, which had shed the blood of the ancient prophets, and was thus *to fill up the measure of its iniquity*. This recollection of His destined place of suffering, however, raised not His resentment but His pity ; and He spoke of His willingness to shelter and protect her inhabitants with the affection of the maternal bird to her brood, not only now, but often ; it should seem therefore that He refers to earlier periods of their history, before His incarnation. Language such as this, inexplicable in the mouth of a mere human teacher, is most suitable to the God of Israel, who is compared in the Song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 11.) to an eagle *who stirreth up her nest*, to stimulate her young to exertion, *fluttereth over them* to incite them to try their power of flying, and *beareth them on her wings*. And, *Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings*, is the prayer of David, when *the wicked, as deadly enemies*, compassed him about, (Psalm xvii. 3.) The bird alluded to in the Gospel (which in this passage is rendered in the Vulgate *Gallina*) is probably the Hen ; and Euripides, (Herc. Furens 71.) who employs the same simile, expresses what here must be understood, that the bird protects her young at the risk of her life. Both images are eminently characteristic of Him, who is at once *our Guide* unto death, and a Shield unto *them that put their trust in Him*. As the Eagle, He will lead His people in the *waste howling wilderness* ; as the Hen, He is *a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it, and is safe*. He had long besought them through His prophets, He now beseeches in person, and afterwards besought by His Apostles ; but all laboured in vain ; they would not listen to the invitation, their ruin therefore was wholly from themselves. He then solemnly announced, that the imprecation of the Psalmist (lxix. 2.) speaking in His person, *Let their habitation be desolate*, was about to be verified in the fate of the nation ; and drew their attention to

the wonderful prophecy of His sufferings and triumph, in the 118th Psalm, by declaring, that they should see Him no more till they were willing to hail Him as the Messiah, by exclaiming in its words, *Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

89. *Jesus dines with a Pharisee on the Sabbath, and relates the Parable of a Supper, which those who had been invited excused themselves from attending. Luke xiv. 1—24.*

The Jewish Sabbath, not only as originally instituted, but even with all the additional regulations of the traditional Law, was not so burthensome as we are apt to suppose. The nation scrupulously abstained from whatever the most rigid interpreter could show to be a manual work; and the kindling of a fire, and the dressing of victuals on it, are expressly forbidden by Moses; yet still it was not a Fast, but a Feast. A chief Pharisee, who is called a Ruler, a member therefore of the Sanhedrin, invited our Lord to dine with him on that day, and He did not scruple to attend. It appears to have been a grand entertainment, to which many had been previously invited; and Michaelis conjectures, that it was a Feast of tenths and first-fruits, which will throw light upon a part of the conversation. According to the Mosaic Law, beside the tithe assigned to the Levites, a second was presented as a thank-offering at the great festivals; and the flesh of the animals that were offered at the altar in those sacrifices in which it was lawful to eat it, after deducting what was to be burned and what belonged to the priests, was appropriated to entertainments, to which were to be invited the stranger, the widow, and the orphan. The day was not divided by the Jews as it is by us, but commenced with sunset; and began with the principal meal, which might be plentiful, without in any degree interfering with the

rest required, as the dressing of it would be on the preceding day. There was a man present who had the dropsy, and our Saviour first asked the company, if it were lawful to heal on the sabbath. They were silent, for they did not dare to say that the Law forbade their doing good on that day, and He, laying His hand on him, healed him, and sent him away. He might, as in many other instances, have effected the cure by a word, but He preferred an action, though as little laborious as possible, that He might reprove their superstition and malignity, which He did by the comparison which He had so lately used in the synagogue.

Observing the Lawyers and Pharisees contending for precedence, He reproved their desire of distinction, in terms similar to those of Solomon, (Prov. xxv. 6, 7.) *Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men; for better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.* He then, turning to his host, recommended him when he made an entertainment not to invite his rich relations and neighbours, who would ask him in return, but those to whom it would be an act of charity. We are not to take the advice so literally as to abjure all exercise of hospitality, which would be in opposition to the social feelings which God hath implanted in us, not to be extirpated but to be regulated, and was sanctioned by Him on other occasions; but it teaches us, that we cannot innocently expend so much in entertainments to our acquaintance, as to deprive us of the power of making due provisions for the wants of the distressed; and that we may confidently affirm is not due provision, which does not require some self-denial. Neither is it required that, in the present state of society, *the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind*, should be guests at our table. The spirit of the precept seems to be preserved, if we provide them with dinners at

their homes, and the command, like those of requiring mercy and not sacrifice, and of hating our father and mother, may be considered, according to the well-known Hebrew idiom, merely as representing, that the relieving the distressed ought to take precedence of social entertainments.

His declaration, that such should be recompensed at the resurrection of the just, led one of the company to exclaim, how blessed it would be to eat and drink in the kingdom of God; when, to show how little this blessing was really coveted, though men might fancy they desired it, our Saviour related a Parable, in which the rejection of the Gospel by different characters is exhibited under the figure of a Feast, which the guests, who had been invited, on various reasons declined to attend. To understand the scope of the Parable, we must recollect that the invitation did not find them engaged, but had been previously accepted. It is material also to observe, that the guests did not plead amusement, but business. Their occupations were lawful in themselves, and proper; but their perverseness appeared by their pursuing them at an improper season; and probably an undue attachment to things in themselves innocent, and even requiring attention, will be found at last, more than positive sin, to have been the ruin of the majority of mankind. All the invited having excused themselves, *the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind*, were brought in *from the streets and the lanes*, at the command of the Master of the feast, but still there was room; so he ordered his servants to go into the *highways and hedges, that his house might be filled*. Those who rejected the feast were the leading characters of the Jewish nation; the blind and lame are the minority, *the publicans and harlots*, who, themselves scorned by their rulers and teachers, welcomed a despised Messiah; the third class, whom it might not be expedient to distinguish more clearly, are the Gentiles. But though this is the primary meaning, the Parable will be found

to apply with no less propriety to individuals in every age and country ; to the self-righteous, who accept but neglect the invitation ; the humble, who willingly consent, and the timid, who feeling their unworthiness, venture not to come till repeatedly pressed. Some commentators, who *know not what manner of spirit they are of*, have caught at the expression, *compel them to come in*, to support the anti-christian doctrine of persecution ; but the fair inference from their strained interpretation of a single word in a Parable, is the weakness of their cause, and the want of scriptural authority to support it ; and it is evident, from the use of the original term ἀνάγκασον<sup>†</sup> on other occasions, that no other compulsion was designed than earnest entreaty, which indeed was all that one servant could use towards a multitude. The third class would be slow to believe that the invitation could be serious, and would therefore require to be repeatedly pressed.

90. *Jesus requires His disciples to love Him more than their nearest relatives, and to be ready to forsake all that they have for His sake. Luke xiv. 25—35.*

Jesus next assured the great multitudes that went with Him, that no man was able to be His disciple who suffered attachment to his relatives or to himself to interfere with His superior claims upon his love ; and that, as His disciple must take up his cross, and be ready at His call to leave his family, his possessions, and occupations, a prudent man, before he engaged in His service, would count the costs, and not expose himself to ridicule like the thoughtless Builder, who begins a tower without calculating if he have the means of finishing it ; or the improvident Sovereign, who rushes upon war

<sup>†</sup> *He constrained (ἀνάγκασεν) His disciples to go out into a ship. Matt. xiv. 22. Why compellest thou (ἀναγκάζεις) the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? Gal. ii. 14.*

with one who is manifestly more powerful. Salt is good, but if it lose its saltiness, it has no value, and is consequently thrown away ; so the professing Christian, who has the form without the substance of religion, will be rejected as perfectly useless.

91. *The Parables of the lost Sheep, of the lost Drachma, and of the Prodigal Son. Luke xv.*

“ The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual ;” (Art. xxxi.) and therefore after His resurrection the Apostles were authorized to proclaim in His name, forgiveness to all the descendants of Adam. The cause, though indicated in the blood-shedding so often appointed in the Law, He did not Himself reveal, but He continually invited sinners to come unto Him, and by parable and by direct instruction, and above all in His form of prayer, He had shown the placability of His Father. This doctrine, peculiar to Christianity, and which entitles it to its name of *Good Tidings*, ought to be thankfully received by all, since all, even those who have been regenerated, *offend in many things*, (James iii. 2.) and deceive themselves if *they say they have no sin*. (1 John i. 8.) Still it has proved a stumblingblock to Christians as well as to Jews, and some of the former would restrict the grant to the washing away of sin at Baptism in the laver of Regeneration. Happily however there are many passages of Scripture announcing a full and free pardon, to those already in covenant with God, both under the old and the new dispensation ; none of which is more encouraging than St. John’s declaration, that *God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins ; faithful*, because He has promised ; *just*, because His Son has borne the penalty of them. Our Church, therefore, rightly in her 16th Article maintains, that “ they

are to be condemned who deny the place of Forgiveness to such Christians as truly repent;" and in the third Homily, "that they which do sin after Baptism, when they turn again to God unfeignedly, are washed by this Sacrifice from their sins in such sort, that there remaineth not any spot of sin that shall be imputed to their damnation." The error seems to have originated from the apprehension, that the truth if broadly stated would be abused by the immoral. Perhaps it might not have prevailed so much, if it had been considered that repentance is the indispensable condition of forgiveness, and that the blood of Christ not only obtains pardon, but *cleanses from all sin*. The redeemed are not only clothed with His righteousness, but *they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*.

The murmuring of the Scribes and Pharisees, when publicans and notorious sinners drew near to hear Him, gave occasion to our Lord to inculcate this doctrine, which He did in three Parables. In the two first, He justified Himself by the ordinary practice of mankind; for the Shepherd of a hundred sheep would leave his flock to recover one that had wandered from the fold; and a Woman who possessed ten drachms, if she lost one, would use every exertion to recover it. Both would call upon their friends and neighbours to rejoice in their success, and He intimated how His own conduct ought to have affected them by declaring, that in like manner one penitent sinner would be the cause of more joy to angels, than ninety-nine just persons that did not need repentance. Strictly speaking, there are none such: this affirmation, therefore, has occasioned some perplexity, but surely without reason, as we are not to look for a theological axiom in such a speech, but take it as a popular expression, for such as are comparatively free from sin. In these Parables He shows the anxiety of the Son of Man *to seek and to save that which was lost*.



In a third, of a Father and two Sons, He at once delineates a real penitent, and contrasts his gracious reception by God's mercy with the harsh and uncharitable treatment of him by man. The narrative, brief as it is, like that of the Samaritan, is most beautiful as a composition, though its import is too weighty to suffer us to dwell upon such inferior considerations. The younger son seems to claim as a right a certain share of his father's property during his lifetime, in order to establish himself; as not having the same security for the future as the elder brother, whose inheritance would be greater. Thus Abraham had given his sons portions, and sent them away, keeping Isaac his heir with him. The depth of distress and the humiliation of the prodigal could not have been represented more impressively to a Jewish audience, than by the repulsive occupation to which he was driven of keeping swine, and by his longing, from the scanty supply of food assigned to him, to partake of the pods of the carob tree, which were defiled by that unclean animal, which his education must have rendered to him, as to them, an object of aversion and disgust. His amendment is strikingly expressed by the term *coming to himself*, which shows the absurdity and madness of *the excess of riot to which he had run*; and his language, reminding one of David's, *I have sinned against Heaven*, shows the reality of his repentance; which is confirmed by his determination to return to his father. The infinite compassion of God, who is ever more ready to grant than man to ask, is marked by the affecting circumstance, that his father does not wait for his return, but as soon as ever he sets out, runs to meet him, and instead of reproaching, embraces and kisses him. His confession of ingratitude and guilt is interrupted by an order given to one servant to exchange his rags for the best robe, and to another to kill the fatted calf, reserved for a feast. Thus the penitent will not be upbraided

by his heavenly Father, *for none of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him*, (Ezek. xxxiii. 16.) *but shall be cast into the depths of the sea*, (Micah vii. 19.) and God will cause him to be arrayed in the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness, and will treat him not as a servant, the utmost the prodigal had ventured to solicit, but as a son. The arrival of this penitent is the signal for music and dancing, and in like manner the recovery of a lost sinner adds to the happiness of Heaven. The father and his household rejoice in his return, but the elder brother repines at this kind reception, and even complains that his own constant and faithful service has never been recompensed by the smallest favour, while the greatest is lavished upon this prodigal. The two brothers are supposed by some commentators to represent the Jews and the Gentiles, and it is easy to trace a resemblance; but they misconceive the scope of the Parable; for the context shows, that the prodigal represents the penitent sinner, such as frequently came to the Saviour while on earth; the elder brother the supercilious and self-approving pharisee, such as now surrounded Him; and He is obviously speaking of sinners within the Church. The Gentile indeed was also in a far country, but he had not designedly gone there; and the object of the Parable is not to show God's mercy to the Heathen, but the restoration to baptismal privileges of the lapsed Christian if penitent, though guilty of gross sins; a consolatory doctrine, rejected by some rigid divines, yet taught not only in this Parable, but directly in other passages of the New Testament, and especially by St. Paul, who commands the Corinthian sinner to be readmitted into the Church, lest he should be *swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*. The Parable has lost none of its force among the changes of manners that more than eighteen centuries have produced; for under every modification of Religion we find the two characters here delineated. "Among the mistakes about repentance," says Jortin,

in a Sermon on this Parable, “ is the notion, that a constant obedience is not to be preferred to the most sincere and active repentance.” This is a maxim which no reasonable person will deny ; but he begs the question, when he adds, that “ the father, who at first rejoiced so greatly at the return of the prodigal, yet in his sedate judgment makes a wide difference between the penitent son and the innocent son.” We have no testimony to the merit of the latter but his own, and his sullenness and reproachful reply to his father, which are all that are recorded concerning him, seem to show a character proud of its freedom from gross sins, and certainly displeasure at the cordial forgiveness of a converted brother. Self-examination, it is to be feared, will detect such a feeling latent in the hearts of many who have been preserved by God’s providence, or restraining grace, from a similar course of wickedness. It is compatible with much virtue, but the Parable is a warning to subdue this natural propensity, which cannot be pleasing to Him who rejoices over every soul that was lost and is found, and in a believer, as he advances in holiness and humility, it will gradually die away. Macknight more justly remarks, that the goodness with which the father bore the surly peevishness of the elder brother, whom he still calls son notwithstanding his insolent speech, is little inferior to the mercy shown in pardoning the younger. The result of the father’s remonstrance is not recorded. Publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of Heaven before Pharisees, yet it is also open to them, and has been entered by some. The Parable, therefore, may be in every age as useful to persons of such disposition, as to prodigals.

93. *The Parables of the Unjust Steward, and of the Rich Man and the Beggar. Luke xvi.*

Unbelievers have objected to the tendency of the Parable of the unjust Steward ; and there are even Christians who find

a difficulty in reconciling it with the perfect morality contained in whatever other instruction our Saviour has condescended to give. Numerous and strange expositions have consequently been suggested; yet one would think that none but prejudiced or very careless hearers could draw improper inferences from it, for He calls the steward unjust, and a child of this world, and points out its moral, so that even those who do not understand the reasoning may take it upon His authority. Whenever the word Lord occurs in the New Testament, we are apt to think of our Redeemer; but it is not He, but the steward's lord, or master, that commends him; and this consideration will go far towards removing the objection, which would not have been felt in so great a degree in England, if *φρονίμως* had been rendered in the authorized version as it is by Wycliffe, *prudently* instead of *wisely*. An ancient rhetorician has observed, that "in comparisons it is not necessary that there should be a resemblance in the objects, but only in the qualities for the sake of which they are compared". Thus the poet likens his hero to a lion, merely that he may bring to our mind the idea of courage common to both: our Saviour compared Himself to a thief, only on account of the unexpectedness of His coming; and in this Parable of an unjust steward he designs to recommend not dishonesty, but prudence. Accused, and justly, of wasting his master's goods, not strong enough to dig, and too proud to beg, his object is his own maintenance, when he is turned out of his office. With this view he calls upon his master's debtors; whether these were tenants who paid their rents in kind, or dealers who contracted to supply the household with corn and oil, is immaterial; and suggested such alterations in their contracts as would benefit them at his lord's expense. To one he remits half, to another only a fifth, of what is due; but these details I consider are introduced only to complete the narrative,

<sup>t</sup> Ad Herennium, iv.

without a specific signification. The means he employed were iniquitous, but they answered his end; and he is brought forward to show the greater sagacity and perseverance of the children of this world than of the children of light; and to shame the latter for not pursuing their good aim—the securing a happy eternity—with the same consistency as he did his bad aim, the obtaining through unjust cunning a provision for this life. As the steward by these fraudulent dealings with the debtors secured to himself, when discarded, a temporary home, we are invited to make to ourselves friends out of our money, here called the *mammon of unrighteousness*, that when our stewardship is terminated by death, it may be the means of bringing us into *everlasting habitations*. The disciples being poor, might think themselves unconcerned in the parable; Jesus therefore assured them, that he who is faithful in the management of a little, will be faithful if entrusted with much; showing by the observation, that it could not be the faithlessness of the steward that He meant to recommend. He added, that *if they were not faithful in the unrighteous or false mammon, which is the property of another*, that is, of God, how could they expect that He would commit to their trust the *true*, which might be called their own, because it would not be committed to them as a temporary trust, for which they must render an account, but would be held by an unalienable tenure. The expression, *unrighteous mammon*, staggers many; but the perishable wealth of this world is so called, not because unrighteously acquired, as in the instance of the steward, but because it is itself unrighteous towards its possessors, by deceiving them both in the enjoyments it promises, and in its fleeting nature, since often *riches certainly make themselves wings and fly away*. And thus its meaning appears, because it is opposed not to *righteous* but *true*; and unrighteous

<sup>r</sup> The sense is obscured in our version by the adding *riches*, which, as the italic how, has no equivalent in the original.

is also used in other places for what is false, and does not fulfil what it holds out. He concluded with the alarming declaration, that as no man can at the same time be faithful to two masters, it is impossible to reconcile the service of God and Mammon; and this personification of riches shows, that, as the Apostle says, the love of them is a kind of idolatry. *The fine gold* is not only inordinately valued, for the sake of what it can procure, but is by too many made *their confidence*, or mammon, for the word (a Syriac one for Plutus, the God of wealth) means that in which men trust; and thus in their estimation, it practically supersedes their reliance upon Him, to whom *belong the silver and the gold*, by transferring it to what is only His gift, which they are too apt to ascribe to their own diligence, or good fortune, instead of to His Providence.

This parable was spoken to His disciples, but in the presence of the Pharisees, who were covetous, and derided Him, and was followed up by a narrative addressed to them, which teaches that it is not enough to refrain from wasting our Master's property, and defrauding Him like the unjust steward, but that we must be not only negatively innocent, but positively good, and spend to His glory the mammon which is not our own, but lent us by Him, that hereafter He may receive it with interest. The condition of two men in this world and in the next are contrasted. The one had enjoyed a life of luxury; the other, lying at his porch full of ulcers, had endured a miserable existence. But after death the beggar was *carried by the angels into* the abode of the blessed departed spirits, called by the Jews as here, *Abraham's bosom*, while the rich man is tormented in the division of Hades assigned to the wicked, parted from that of the good by an impassable gulph. Their condition is now reversed; Lazarus has become rich, the rich man poor, and the latter in his misery entreats the former to cool his burning tongue with one drop of water; and when he is told by Abraham that his request cannot be

granted, he in vain petitions that the same Lazarus may be sent to earth to warn his five surviving brethren, that they may escape the flames that torment him. The rich man's wealth does not appear to have been acquired unjustly, or to have been expended profligately; it is only said, that he was clothed splendidly in the most expensive articles, *purple and fine linen*, and enjoyed himself *every day sumptuously*; and Abraham upbraids him with no wicked abuse of his riches, not even with neglect of Lazarus, whom he probably relieved in a degree, (though not sufficiently,) or he would hardly have named him. He merely reminds him, that he had received his good things. We must also suppose, that Lazarus had lived a life of faith and resignation; for poverty and misery alone have no merit to procure admission into a state of bliss. The history therefore enforces and illustrates the guilt and punishment of him who lives exclusively to himself; an awful truth, which many professing Christians can hardly be brought to acknowledge; and in addition to its special object, it incidentally opposes the two contrary tenets of Purgatory, and the Sleep of the soul in the interval between death and the day of judgment. It shows, that the condition of men is unalterably fixed at death, and consequently that our Church has justly rejected the former tenet as a "fond thing vainly invented," (Art. xxii.) while it guards us from the latter, which seems to have originated from the desire of removing the foundation of the former. The ancient, and I believe the true, doctrine is, that the soul never loses its consciousness, but on leaving the body departs immediately according to its character into a state of bliss or misery, neither of which will be complete till at the last day it will be reunited to its companion, and received into heaven or cast down into hell. To those who require for a dogma stronger evidence than that of a parable, it may be observed, that it is implied throughout the Bible, and that the abode of those who have departed in the faith, still known to

the Jews by the name of Abraham's bosom, is called *Paradise*, both by our Lord, (Luke xxiii. 43.) and by St. Paul, (2 Cor. xii. 4.) the former distinguishing it from the Grave, the latter from Heaven. The rich man's request for his brethren is natural, and we feel inclined to think with him, that seeing and conversing with a departed friend is the best evidence that could be obtained or desired. We are however assured by Him, *who knew what was in man*, that they who are unconvinced by the Scriptures, would not be persuaded even by an apparition from the dead. This very proof was indeed not long afterwards afforded to many by the resurrection of another Lazarus, and its inefficacy confirms the remark. Such evidence, supposing it not to be rejected as an imposition, might alarm, but it would not change the heart; it would not therefore effect any real reformation. “<sup>s</sup> Hence, perhaps, we may learn the reason why this sort of intercourse between the other world and this is so very rare, because it could serve no good end; for God having already given sufficient evidence of all things we are concerned to know, there is no room to expect or hope for such admonitions. He sent the greatest Person of the other world to us, His own Son, and sent Him too from the dead; and why He should send a man from the dead to tell what His Son, His apostles and prophets, have already declared, you that can give the reason, give it. Our Saviour's Resurrection was something more than merely the apparition of a dead man; He foretold the time and circumstances of His Resurrection, and put the proof of His mission and doctrine upon the performance of this great wonder; so that His resurrection became the direct proof, that the doctrine He taught was the doctrine of Him who had the power to raise the dead; and His authority after the resurrection was not barely the authority of one coming from the dead, but the authority of Him who has power to raise the dead, which authority is

<sup>s</sup> Sherlock, Discourse 34th, p. 134, and 144.



greater than that of any man, and therefore proves the divinity of His commission. And here lies the true difference between the resurrection of Christ, and that of those whom He raised from the dead." Unbelief however, properly so called, is not laid to the charge of this rich man, or his brethren; it was not a future state that they disbelieved, but their own responsibility for the employment of their property; and the rich man does not say of his brethren, that they will believe, but, that *they will repent*.

94. *Jesus declares the power of faith, and that the most perfect obedience is due, and cannot be meritorious. Luke xvii. 1—10.*

Jesus then warned His disciples, that believers will meet with stumbling-blocks, and declared the awful guilt of those who put them before them, by assuring them that it would be better for such to be cast into the lake and drowned. He next commanded forgiveness to a repenting brother, though he may have trespassed against us seven times in a day. The disciples perceived the excellence and the difficulty of the precept, and that faith was the only principle from which it could proceed. They therefore besought Him to increase it: and as no created being could either give it or make it grow, they must already have had at least an indistinct notion of His Divinity. The connection between a vigorous faith full of fruits and humility is exemplified in a Parable, which teaches that they must obey not some of His commandments, but all. The servant who ploughed, or tended cattle, when he came in from the field was expected to wait at table, nor was he thanked for his attendance; so they, when they had done all that they were ordered, could not claim merit, as if they had conferred a favour; they were still but unprofitable (ἀχρηστοί) servants, that is, they had laid Him under no obligation, having rendered to Him nothing above the service due. Now

if the utmost that a man can do is no more than his bounden duty, then his reward *must be of grace, not of debt*; and the doctrine, that the supererogatory merit of one may be transferred to another and make up for his deficiencies, is deprived of its foundation.

95. *Jesus reproves the Sons of Zebedee, who wished that Fire from heaven should destroy the Samaritans. Luke ix. 51—56.*

The nearest and most frequented road to Jerusalem from Galilee, which was through Samaria, was a journey of three days, and often occasioned disturbances, sometimes even bloodshed. The enmity of the inhabitants was raised against persons going to Jerusalem to keep the Feasts: and of those none could be so offensive to them as that of the Dedication of the Temple. Jesus had been received by the Samaritans in a very different manner, when at the commencement of His ministry He had sat down wearied by Jacob's well: He was not merely entertained with hospitality, but honoured as a Prophet. Then, however, He came from Jerusalem, now He was travelling to it; and by this avowed preference of the Holy City to their Mountain, condemned their schism, and in proportion to His reputation excited their resentment. His rebuke of the fiery zeal of the sons of Zebedee, and His leading His disciples forward to another village without even a remonstrance, is a decisive protest against propagating religion by force, and the suppressing heresy by the secular power. James and John said, *Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume these Samaritans, even as Elias did*, in the same country, at whose prayer it twice destroyed a band of fifty soldiers with their captain, sent by the king to apprehend him. (2 Kings i. 9—14.) The disciples in their anger overlooked

the difference of the cases, and were as yet unconscious that the Gospel breathed a milder spirit than the Law. These Samaritans were highly blameable, but their inhospitality arose from national prejudice, not from personal enmity; nor did they ill-treat Jesus, though they refused to receive Him. Above all, the disciples were unconscious that they themselves were influenced more by resentment than by zeal for their Master, nor was their indignation probably quite free from bigotry, though they were disgusted by that vice when exhibited in others. He therefore assured them, that they knew not *what manner of spirit they were of*, for He was come to promote the temporal as well as the spiritual happiness of mankind, *not*, as He had proved by His miraculous cures, *to destroy men's lives, but to save them. So they went to another village.* Unhappily this warning prophetic voice has been little heeded, amid the turbulence of passion. Men avowing themselves the followers of Jesus, have kindled fires to burn not only Jews and infidels, but even those who have acknowledged the same Saviour, and have designated this cruel gratification of their religious fury, an "act of Faith."

This decisive protest by Jesus, the Divine *Author and Finisher of our faith*, against propagating it by the sword or by the stake, now happily acquiesced in by all Protestants, at least in words, though still too often broken by some of them in spirit, induces me to introduce here a brief outline of the history of persecution, beginning with the Emperor Nero, the first open persecutor. For, though persecution is most inconsistent and most odious in a Christian, it is an extraordinary mistake to suppose with many that Paganism is tolerant. The Paganism of Greece and Rome was inseparably interwoven into the State; it was for the legislature to determine what new gods should be worshipped, and with what rites; and it willingly admitted into the Pantheon those of other nations; but it was not in its nature to endure a faith, the professors of which treated its

deities as at best non-entities, more often as devils. It is true, that the Historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire opens his second chapter with the remark, that “the various modes of worship that prevailed within its limits were considered by the people as equally true, by the philosopher as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus, he continues, toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord. Such was the mild spirit of antiquity, that the nations were less attentive to the difference than to the resemblance of their religious worship: and the Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves, that under various names, and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities.” He observes in a note, that “within a century or two, the Gauls themselves applied to their gods the names of Mercury, Mars, &c.” and I may add, that the early Romans, had often blended into one the mythology of the Greeks, and of their Tuscan ancestors. This Polytheism exhibited a “republic of gods of opposite tempers and interests, under the control of one parent and monarch;” and to enlarge their number by the importation of foreign deities, or of deceased men, was no extraordinary proof of liberality. The tutelary divinities of captured cities were even formally invited to exchange their abode for Rome; embassies had been deputed more than once to introduce new objects of devotion, and whatever could incorporate with the system that prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, was welcomed with joy. The worship of many gods is from its nature more tolerant than that of one, yet it exhibits remarkable exceptions, which this author has overlooked, I fear designedly, from a wish of insinuating a disadvantageous contrast of Paganism and Christianity. He indeed acknowledges some obscure traces of intolerance in the Egyptians, as recorded by Juvenal, (Sat. xv.) but he forgets, that one of the indictments on

which Socrates was condemned to death was his ' disbelief in the gods of his country; and that the worshippers of Bacchus ' had been expelled from Rome under the Republic, on a charge of immorality, similar to that often brought against the early Christians, and that the Jews\* were banished first by the Emperor Tiberius, and afterwards by Claudius. The religion of Rome was indeed essentially political. No new divinity, nor even a festival nor a ceremony, could be introduced without the sanction of the Senate and the consent of the Tribunes; they tolerated none that could not be brought into conformity with the established system, and acted to the last upon the Law of the Twelve Tables: " Let no person have peculiar gods of his own, or worship any new or foreign ones in private, unless they be authorized by public authority." All the Colleges of Priests were subject to a supreme Board, itself dependent upon the government filled up by its own members, and consisting of eight, under a President, the Pontifex Maximus; and there was no distinction, like that of Clergy and Laity, which exists in many false religions as well as in the true; but the Priests also filled civil offices, even the very highest, so that Religion was actually merged in the State. If the primitive Christians would have associated with their fellow-citizens at the Theatre, or the Banquet, if they would have watched with them the Gladiators fighting in honour of departed men, and burnt incense to the gods and deceased

<sup>1</sup> The first charge was, that he did not regard as gods those which the State so regarded, but introduced other new demons. The latter was precisely the same accusation as that which brought St. Paul before the Areopagus.

<sup>2</sup> Livy, xxix. 16. on this occasion makes one of the Consuls say, Quoties hoc patrum avorumque ætate negotium est magistratibus datum, ut sacra externa fieri vetarent, sacrificulos vatesque foro, circo, urbe prohiberent, vaticesios libros conquirerent comburerentque, omnem disciplinam sacrificandi præterquam more Romano abolerent?

\* Tacitus Ann. ii. 85. Acts of the Apostles xviii. 2. Suetonius, vita Claudii.

Emperors, they might have worshipped without restraint (as the Pagan Emperor Alexander Severus is said to have done) the Creator and the Redeemer, for then the great principle of intercommunity in religion would have been recognised. But the true God had expressly forbidden Jew and Christian to worship any other Being, and it was their faithful obedience to this commandment that made the heathen hate them as Atheists, and persecute them as Rebels. Utility, not truth, recommended to the Gentile statesman the National Religion. But the spirit of the Mosaic Dispensation was contrary to that of Paganism, for the Israelites *dwelt alone*, and that they might preserve inviolate the worship of Jehovah, they *were not reckoned among the nations who had changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped the creature instead of the Creator*. But Jehovah was more than the God of Israel, He was also their King. With them Church and State were therefore not united, but formed into one body; sins and crimes were equivalent terms, and consequently idolatry became high treason. Christianity, while it adheres as rigidly as Judaism to the sole worship of one God, is from its nature more liberal. Its citizenship, *πολίτευμα*, (Phil. iii. 20.) being in Heaven, it keeps itself distinct from the State, which it leaves to politicians to mould into monarchy or republic as they please, only infusing into its laws its own spirit, and supporting peace and order by the sanctions of eternal punishments and rewards, requiring no more than liberty, and a sufficient maintenance for its Ministers. As Christianity spread and attracted notice in the Roman Empire, persecution would naturally follow, and the patient endurance of Martyrs, who *accepted not deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection*, was mistaken by their persecutors, who could not enter into their feelings, for unreasonable obstinacy. As long as Christians were confounded with Jews, they enjoyed the protection generally granted to the latter, whose exclusive worship though treated

with contempt, was yet tolerated as that not of a sect but of a nation. The Jews however, at once to preserve themselves, and to turn if possible the contempt and hatred from which they suffered upon those who had acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, soon taught the Gentiles to know the distinction. St. Paul and St. Peter were the victims of the first persecution under Nero; and Domitian, (Eusebius iii. 18, 19, 20.) while he spared St. Jude's grandchildren, the legal representatives it seems of David, because they made no claim to an earthly kingdom, banished St. John to Patmos. Persecution however was by no means peculiarly characteristic of Tyrants; Christians were regarded by all who did not join them as enemies of the State; and Sovereigns, who in other respects are most deservedly admired, as Trajan and Marcus Aurelius\*, enforced the laws against them. Ten persecutions, greatly differing in severity and in duration, after shorter or longer intervals, are reckoned within a period of about two centuries and a half, till the first Christian Emperor established the faith in his new Rome, which had never been polluted by idolatry.

Constantine had not been long settled on his throne, before he was called upon to determine an essential difference in the Church, and convened at Nicæa the first General Council; which was not content to define the orthodox Faith, but guarded it by anathemas against those who rejected it, a custom which has been adopted by subsequent Councils; and though they have been dropped from the Nicene Creed, they have been retained in that which bears the name of Athanasius. The proceedings were followed up by the banishment of Arius,

\* The first, it appears from his correspondence with Pliny, enforced the laws against the Christians with reluctance, but the latter was an implacable persecutor upon principle, hating Christians, whom he ignorantly condemned (xi. 3.) for their obstinacy; and though admired as a Philosopher, seems in reality to have combined the superstition of the idolater with the self-sufficiency of the Stoic.

and many who adhered to his doctrine, and banishment led to confiscation of property, and other civil penalties, to be inflicted by the temporal power. Christians soon forgot, that their contests were not to be settled by carnal weapons, and that the Apostle had forewarned them that there *must be heresies*, not that they should extirpate them, but *that they which are approved may be made manifest*. The Christians, when in power, were unwilling to retaliate upon the heathen, and Polytheism, driven from the cities into the villages, and thence called Paganism, may be said to have died a natural death. It was against those who acknowledged the same Saviour, though they differed in other respects in doctrine and in discipline, that the orthodox chiefly argued, whom in the end they punished as criminals. Severe laws, depriving heretics of offices of profit and dignity, taking from them the capability of receiving and bequeathing estates, and imposing on them fines, were enacted by succeeding Emperors, and are preserved in the Theodosian code. In some few cases they were made liable to death, but this law was usually evaded through the connivance of Emperors, or the intercession of the Church, which at that early period showed an aversion to this unchristian method of suppressing error, through the mouth of its most distinguished professors. Thus Chrysostom (Hom. in Matt. 47.) freely declared, that tares were not to be rooted out. It is a painful fact, that the Doctor of Grace, as he is justly called, to whom the faith is perhaps more deeply indebted, than to any other uninspired teacher, was induced to maintain in some of his tracts, (Ep. ad Dulcitium; De corruptione Donatist. ad Vincentium,) that the Unity of the Church should be preserved by the temporal power. Nevertheless, Augustine earnestly entreats Marcellinus to extend mercy even to some Donatists, who from their sanguinary excesses against the Catholics, had made themselves as citizens



amenable to capital punishment; and numerous passages may be collected from his voluminous writings, which breathe a more Christian spirit. In extenuation of the former, it may be justly urged, that he had written in an instant of irritation, zealously contending for the Faith: in his cooler moments he declares, that no good men are pleased to have any one, although he be an heretic, prosecuted unto death; and (ii. 83.) tells Petilian the Donatist Bishop, that God had so ordered in His Providence, that though the Emperor had made many Rescripts to admonish and correct them, there was no Imperial Law commanding them to be put to death<sup>r</sup>. Augustin lived to know that Priscillian, a learned and eloquent Spanish Bishop, with six of his followers, was condemned and executed for tenets of a Manichæan tendency, A. D. 385, at Treves, under the authority of the Emperor Maximus, the first of Christian Princes who shed the blood of his Christian subjects on account of their religious opinions, and he is considered, apparently with reason, the first Martyr to religious dissent. On this occasion, both Ambrose, and Martin of Tours, asserted the cause of Toleration. Jovinian, who had opposed the austerities recommended by Priscillian, was himself no less an object of persecution. The Pope and St. Ambrose, inconsistently with his former conduct, pressed for his punishment, and he was exiled for life, by the Emperor Honorius, to a rock off the coast of Illyria.

In the Eastern Empire, Leo the Isaurian, of a new family, boldly undertook the Reformation of the Church, and began with the destruction of images, which led, as has been observed, to the Pope's repouncing his allegiance. He had to contend with the superstition of the Laity as well as of the Monks, but he persevered till his death, and was imitated by his son, during a very long reign; but after a vigorous opposition of fifty years, the empress Irene, who reigned as the Regent of her child, his minor great grandson, convoked

<sup>r</sup> Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book xvi. ch. 2.

the second Council of Nicæa, (the last that is acknowledged by the Greek Church,) which through the united exertions of the monks and the people, the Pope and the Empress restored the honours of which the images of our Saviour and the Saints had been deprived, but required that they should not rise in relief from the surface, but should be painted. We hear no more of persecution in the East, where believers were soon called upon to suspend their disputes, by the inroads of the successors of Mahomet, who severed for ever from the Empire its best provinces with unexampled rapidity.

In the West, the Barbarians acquiesced in the short Roman Creed; and ages of bigotted ignorance rolled on, without an attempt to call in question the authority or the theology of the Popes. Arnold of Brescia, an intrepid pupil of the famous scholastic teacher Abelard, had publicly declaimed against the vices of the Clergy, and, being condemned for heresy by the first Lateran Council, had fled from Italy to Switzerland. The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa delivered him up to his arrogant rival, Adrian IV, the only English Pontiff, memorable for his donation of the lordship of Ireland, which he never in any sense possessed, to our Henry II. and Arnold was burnt alive at Rome, A. D. 1155, being I believe the first person who underwent capital punishment for his opinions by order of a Pope. Still, as in the case of the more celebrated Savonarola, three centuries after, the religious and political Reformer was so blended in his character, that it is hard to say whether he suffered as a rebel, or a heretic. But no doubt long before, even from the time of Charlemagne, multitudes professing doctrines similar to those of the Reformers, intermixed, it has been said by their enemies, and perhaps in some instances truly, with Manichæism, imported from the East, had existed in the south of France, with the name of Albigenses, and with that of Waldenses in the Alpine valleys of Piedmont. Under the auspices of Innocent III, who completed the scheme of Papal pre-

eminence, devised by Gregory the VIIIth, the Clergy awoke from their long slumber, and in the fourth Lateran Council, 1215, by far the most numerous hitherto assembled, enacted Canons for the extirpation of Heresy, by which persons condemned for this offence were made over to the secular power to receive due punishment, with an hypocritical recommendation of them to mercy. This Pontiff showed, by his successive decrees of deposition against two Emperors, and the Kings of France and England, that his comparison of his own power to the Sun, and that of lay sovereigns to the Moon, was no empty boast. He sent among the Albigenses to convert them St. Dominic, the founder of the mendicant Order of Black Friars, and less honourably distinguished as the first Inquisitor: he proclaimed against them, as if they had been infidels, a Crusade, promised Indulgences and Dispensations to all who would engage in this holy war, and transferred the sceptre of their Sovereign Raymond of Tholouse to Simon de Montfort. His object was ultimately gained, but not till long after the death of that General and his own, and the massacre of many thousand persons.

In our own country, to pass from communities to individuals, Wycliff, the morning star, as he has been called, of the Reformation, which he preceded as the dawn the sun, had long pronounced his opinions authoritatively at Oxford from the Professor's chair, sustained by the protection of the young king's uncle, John of Gaunt, and a powerful party in the University, which had been exempted from Episcopal jurisdiction, and paid little regard to the bulls of a distant Pope. His enemies at length prevailed to procure his banishment from Oxford; yet he was suffered to close his life unmolested at his parsonage of Lutterworth. After his death, his tenets widely spread: the Clergy were alarmed at their rapid growth among the Gentry, and still more by his writings against their wealth and dignities; and made unsuccessful attempts to obtain from Parliament the power

of suppressing heresy by capital punishment. Henry IV. not being the direct heir to his deposed Cousin's throne, in his anxiety to strengthen his Parliamentary title by the influence of the Clergy, to whom he chiefly owed his elevation, readily from interest, or, it may be, bigotry, entered into their views, and disgraced the House of Lancaster by consenting to the writ "De Hæretico comburendo," the first that stains the English Statute Book on the subject, and decrees this extreme punishment, "to deter others from forming erroneous opinions contrary to the Catholic faith, and the determination of the Church." This act was enforced within the year upon Sawtre, who had been a popular preacher in a London parish: and as if this had not been enough, another vindictive one against Lollards was passed in the reign of his heroic son, who in this respect trod in his father's steps, and thus incorporated his dynasty with the corruptions of the Papal hierarchy, making one of two alternatives inevitable; either that the improvement of mankind should be cut off, or the sovereignty of his house should cease; a mad and desperate stake, which, exclaims Turner<sup>2</sup> in his history, could only have ended in the issue that ensued. The Bolingbrokes disappeared, and the Reformation proceeded. This writ required heretics to be handed over to the secular power, which is "forthwith to do them to be burnt," and even deprived the Crown of the privilege of pardoning. It continued to disgrace the Statute Book long after the Reformation; and we have instances of its being put into execution upon two Anabaptists under Queen Elizabeth, and two Arians under James I. The Act after this fell into disuse, but it was not actually repealed till the 29th of Charles II. a reign equally distinguished by a corrupt and disgraceful administration, and by excellent laws, which, in the words of Judge Blackstone, (iv. on Public Wrongs,) delivered our land from the slavery of military tenures, our bodies from arbitrary

<sup>2</sup> Turner's Middle Ages of England, vol. 2. book ii.

imprisonment by the Habeas Corpus Act, and our minds from the tyranny of ecclesiastical bigotry, by demolishing this last badge of superstition in the English law. When we reproach Rome with the fires of Smithfield and Oxford, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which expelled two hundred<sup>y</sup> thousand members of the Reformed Church from France, and dispersed and persecuted their congregations, we are reminded, that the importunity of Cranmer extorted from the reluctant Edward his signature to the warrant for burning Joan of Kent for some misconception of our Lord's nature, and that Calvin instigated the Magistrates of Geneva to execute Servetus. We must allow that few Protestant communities who have had the power, have always been able to resist the temptation, and our own cannot plead not guilty to the charge; for not one reign can be named from the Reformation to that of James, in which persons have not been burned for their religion. Even the Non-conformists, who fled from the tyranny of the Court of High Commission, and settled on the bleak and barren shores of New England, to enjoy liberty of worship, according to their conscience, denied to them at home, themselves refused it to others. So far indeed were they from granting this boon, that they conferred upon the civil Magistrate the coercive authority, which they had protested against in Prelates, and enacted and occasionally enforced the penalty of death against those whom they pronounced to be heretics. Of all these cases, that of Servetus is the most notorious, and has excited the greatest indignation; nor would I wish, out of respect to the memory of his eminent opponent, "incomparably the wisest man that ever the French Church did enjoy," to use the words of the judicious Hooker, to extenuate a crime. But candour requires the acknowledgment, that Servetus had

<sup>y</sup> The estimate of Anquetil, *Histoire de France*.

fled from France, on account not of anti-Roman, but anti-Trinitarian opinions, which would have been punished at Paris, no less than at Geneva. Calvin, it is to be lamented, caused him to be tried; but he also solicited, though in vain, that he should not undergo so terrible a death as burning; and while modern historians throw upon him all the blame, the act was approved throughout the Reformed Churches. I believe I may say, by all his contemporaries, with the honourable exception of Bullinger. Happily in our own country, such cases are rare; and it should ever be borne in mind, that under Elizabeth, who was declared by the Pope to be an Usurper, the Missionary Priests suffered not so much on account of their faith, as for treason real or presumed; for other Roman Catholics were not molested. During the reign of her father, which exhibited at times the revolting spectacle of martyrs of both Churches perishing in the same flames, the one for denying his supremacy, the other for maintaining his own creed, the Reformation was by no means completed. Henry, in fact, as his will proves, died a Roman Catholic, though not a Papist, his opposition being not to Roman doctrines, but to Roman authority. And what are the two victims of bigotry under Edward, and the other two under James, (to say nothing about the Lollards of preceding times,) to the four years of the Marian persecution, in which nearly three hundred persons were burnt for their religion, not in a paroxysm of passion, but deliberately and successively in all the counties of England? As soon as danger seemed to menace the Roman Church, it showed itself in its true light. As Gibbon remarks, (ch. 16.) "it defended by violence the empire, which it had acquired by fraud: and a system of peace and benevolence was soon disgraced by proscriptions, wars, massacres, and the institution of "the Holy Office." In the Netherlands alone, more than one hundred thousand of the subjects of Charles V. are said to

have suffered by the hands of the executioners: and this extraordinary number is attested by Grotius, (*Annal. l.i. p. 12.*) “a man of genius and learning, who preserved his moderation amidst the fury of contending sects, and who composed the *Annals* of his own age and country, at a time when the invention of printing had facilitated the means of intelligence, and increased the danger of detection.” Even allowing much exaggeration, we may at least suppose the number made out, if we include the Viceroyalty of the Duke of Alva, under his son. We are so constituted, that we are more affected by the carnage of one well-contested battle field, than by the obscure deaths throughout the campaign; and thus St. Bartholomew’s day shocks us more than the 31,000 victims<sup>z</sup>, that have been immolated in Spain, year after year, during three centuries, by the Holy Office. That tremendous Court, better known to us under the title of the Inquisition, professed, says Bp. Marsh, the unerring judgment which belongs to God alone, while it discards His attribute of mercy: and with stern impartiality, it arrested men and women, ignorant and learned, high and low, and shrunk not from trying Ministers of State, and Ecclesiastics of acknowledged piety and learning, and even of episcopal rank. No genuine Christian could endure even an open and fair trial of a heretic, of the worst description, if his condemnation were to be followed by committing him alive to the flames; but words are not strong enough to reprobate adequately a secret Tribunal, which never confronted the accusers with the accused, and bringing no specific charge, required the latter to discover and declare his offence, and so convict himself. This artful scheme for detecting and punishing heresy, comprehended of late years within its limits, Freemasonry, and even Jansenism; and having been introduced into Spain for the punishing of relapsed Jewish

<sup>z</sup> The estimate in the History of the Inquisition by Llorente, who had been Secretary to it, and had access to its Archives.

converts, it early took cognizance of Jews who had never abjured their faith, and of Mahometans. Though it grew out of the persecution of the Albigenses in the south of France, by the Pontiff to whom our King John did homage, it never found its way into our country. Nor has it flourished in France and Italy; but in Spain it took root, and flourished still more, when reorganised under an Inquisitor General, by Ferdinand of Arragon, and with reluctance by his consort Isabella of Castile. Its Acts of Faith have been performed on a grand scale, and often in the presence of Sovereigns, and for their gratification; yet these perhaps ought to excite less horror, than the misery it has silently and secretly caused to so many families.

When reproached in our turn with acting in the same manner, our answer to Rome is, that our Church has long renounced the right and duty of persecution, which with them is the rule, with us has been the exception; and if at the commencement of our Reformation they can bring two instances in favour of it, it may fairly be replied, that our Prelates had been in that respect contaminated by the system under which they were educated, and that it is contrary to the genius of Protestantism. Even in the first year of Elizabeth, a better spirit began to appear, for an Act of the Legislature restricted the burning of heretics to a Provincial Synod; and a boundary was for the first time fixed to heresy, for no tenets were to be condemned as heretical, except those that are contradictory to the Scriptures, or to the first four General Councils, or which should be hereafter censured by Parliament, with the assent of the Clergy. In the Articles, which are remarkably liberal on the subject of ecclesiastical government, it is determined, that “the Church has authority in controversies of Faith, provided it ordains not any thing contrary to God’s word written,” but it carries this authority no further than is done by these sects that have seceded from it; in fact, no



further than is necessary for its own preservation. Its language, says Bishop Marsh, (*Comparative View of the Churches of England and Rome*), is this; “Persuaded ourselves that our religion is true, we gladly receive all who are willing to partake in our faith and worship. But as our welfare depends on the observance of our rules, we expect such observance from our members in general, and from our authorized ministers in particular. Still if any of its members should think on examination that the creed which he had received was erroneous, we should say, if continuance in our communion would be a restraint on the exercise of your private judgment, you are at liberty to exchange our society for one more congenial with your own opinions. We shall neither throw impediments in the way of your departure, nor follow you as an apostate with pains and penalties, when you have departed from our communion.” But Rome cannot give up her right to enforce obedience from all baptized persons, as long as she maintains her theory, that she is the mistress as well as the mother of all Churches. Allegiance to the Church is accordingly considered by her in the same light as allegiance to the State, and in the official Roman Catechism of the canonised Pius V. heretics and schismatics, though no longer members of the Church, are still reckoned amenable to its power as persons to be punished, and are doomed by anathema to damnation; a doctrine now actually taught in the College of Maynooth. Nor is this exertion of authority confined to individual acts of secession; it embraces Societies, and applies no less to us, whose ancestors withdrew from the Church of Rome, than to them, and to our Queen as much as to us. The principle ratified at Trent had been clearly laid down long before by Boniface VIII. in a celebrated Bull. Starting from the position that the Church is one, and therefore can only have one head, he finds that one in St. Peter’s successors. He then refers to his two swords, one of which he calls

spiritual, the other material; the first to be used by the Church, the other for it; and as one must of necessity be inferior, it is an easy inference, that the King's sword must yield to that of the Priest. The whole doctrine is summed up in this sentence, "Wherefore we declare, that it is absolutely essential to the salvation of every human being, that he be subject unto the Roman Pontiff." Liberal Roman Catholics, shocked at such positions, would fain persuade us, as we have no doubt that in this country at least they have themselves, that this arrogant claim, though it has never been formally retracted, is obsolete; but later Bulls, (as that called in *Cœna Domini*, which excommunicates and anathematises all who do not acknowledge the jurisdiction of the See of Rome, which is still read out in Passion week, before the Pope,) breathe the same spirit; nor can it be excused as the act only of the head of their Church. Their General Councils hold the same language; and not only hold it, but when opportunity offered, fixed their meaning by their conduct. John Huss, (A.D. 1415.) and Jerome of Prague (A.D. 1416.) were the victims, not of John XXIII. who disclaimed all share in the proceedings, and was himself soon after degraded by the Council of Constance, which declared its superiority to the Pope, and proved it by deposing the three who disputed the title, and electing a new one. It had met to reform the Church; it was constituted on a more democratic plan than any former one, and being far more numerous, and divided into five nations, we may fairly say, that it represented the learning, wisdom, and piety of the age. Yet its conduct only showed, that it was as hopeless to expect the object for which it met from these divines, as from the Pope. They decreed, that General Councils should meet at fixed periods; but we have no reason to regret the failure of their scheme, for they revived no forgotten Gospel truth, they only endeavoured to transfer spiritual domination from the Bishop of Rome to themselves; and their sessions

lasted long enough to show, that a body will venture upon bolder acts of iniquity than one individual, being screened by their numbers from reproach. To the guilt of murder, they added that of perfidy. Huss had appeared under the protection of a safe conduct from the Emperor; and the Council justified the violation of it, to which Sigismond assented, by the assertion, that neither faith nor promise, by natural, divine, or human law, was to be observed, to the prejudice of the Catholic Religion; a principle which had been already announced by Urban VIII. A.D. 1378, and is founded on the Decretals. Thus the Council demonstrated, that Persecution is a principle as much ecclesiastical as papal.

As recently as A.D. 1781, a Nun was the last victim of the Spanish Inquisition, and we may hope that never more may real heretics undergo the punishment of death; yet in most Christian countries, Dissenters from the national Church are deprived more or less of the privileges of citizens, and many retain what may be called the negative persecution, of not allowing their public worship. Complete toleration is comparatively recent in any; and it is mortifying to know, that in Holland, where it was first sanctioned by the State, it originated, not in principle, but in commercial policy. It is painful to think how slowly men, professing a religion which so preeminently inculcates peace and good will among men, have learnt what may be considered an elementary lesson. Even the wise and enlightened Bacon, who, both in philosophy and politics, was so far before his age, thought that Uniformity in Religion was indispensable to the support of Government, and that no toleration could safely be given to Sectaries. Milton, himself a Sectarian, went further, but he refused it to all who denied the sufficiency of Scripture; and it was during the civil wars, when the Protestants were divided into Churchmen, Presbyterians, and Independents, that

Toleration was first advocated by two eminent divines, whose works still edify and delight the Christian, the Independent Owen, and the Episcopalian Taylor. Even Locke, the friend of civil and religious liberty, and the author of Letters in favour of toleration, considers that Roman Catholics are justly excepted from it, on account of their allegiance in spiritual concerns to a foreign Bishop. The Act of Toleration, which so honourably distinguishes the reign of William III. and was at the time condemned by many, would not now be regarded as a liberal measure, for Dissent though thereby legalized, was subjected to many restrictions. It was limited to persons professing a belief in the Trinity, and required that dissenting ministers and schoolmasters, though they received no remuneration from the State, should sign all the doctrinal Articles of the Church of England. In our own country, all who profess any form of Christianity, enjoy the same political rights as the members of the Established Church, and all offices, with a very limited exception, are open to all. The only danger now is, that of running into the opposite extreme, and of encouraging and remunerating what ought only to be allowed; and that from excess of mistaken liberality, the State will hurt the feelings of the majority, by gratifying the minority; which it must do if it endow in any degree a Church, which the nation has formerly denounced for centuries as *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*.

96. *Jesus cleauseth at their own petition ten Lepers, of whom the only grateful one was a Samaritan. Luke xvii. 11—19.*

As if it were to show that this bigotry was not universal, the behaviour of these Samaritans is contrasted with that of an individual of that nation who was one of a company of ten Lepers. In obedience to the Law, which declared them to be

unclean, they stood at a distance, and cried out, *Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.* All had cried out; but the Samaritan alone, when cured, both *glorified God*, and fell down <sup>at</sup> the feet of Jesus, *giving Him thanks.* Jesus in return said unto him, *Arise, thy Faith hath saved thee.* All had been cleansed, as they went to show themselves, as He ordered them, to the priests: all then must have had faith in His miraculous power; but the Samaritan alone believed in Him as a Saviour, and alone received a spiritual blessing. This appears to be the explanation of an apparent contradiction. Salvation in Scripture is an ambiguous word, signifying deliverance; and the context only can show when it refers to the body and when to the soul, to this world or to the next. *He was saved*, or, as it is sometimes rendered, *was made whole*, is in the New Testament equivalent to, *he was cured.* When blind Bartimæus adjoined Jesus as *the Son of David*, and He answered, *Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee*; the restoration of that faculty is the salvation intended. But it is no less plain, that when Jesus said of Zacchæus, *This day is salvation come to this house*, He spoke of salvation from sin. In St. Peter's vindication of the miracle wrought upon the lame man, the two ideas are blended together: *Be it known, that by the name of Jesus Christ doth this man stand before you whole.* And then, rising from this inferior deliverance to the higher import of the word, he continues, *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* The apostles, the rulers, and the audience, had the full use of their limbs, but they all needed eternal salvation; and St. Peter wished to persuade them from the proof they had just had of the power of Jesus over the body, that He was also a Saviour from sin, and from the wrath to come. We conclude then that this Samaritan was saved not from leprosy only, but also from that moral malady, of which it is a significant type, which renders

a man as unfit for communion with his Creator, as does a loathsome disease for intercourse with his fellow creatures. Our first feeling on reading this history is indignation at the ingratitude of the nine; let us, however, take care that they do not rise up in judgment against us. Deficient as they were in the gratitude, which the Lord who seeth the heart requires, they did more than those in our days, who on recovering from some dangerous disorder, merely desire the minister to offer up thanks for them in the congregation; and there are, it is to be feared, many who do not make even this acknowledgment. The priest was not to certify the cure of a leper, till he had made atonement for him before the Lord; and this formal service, consisting of purification and sacrifices, required eight days, and would subject him to some expense. It is evident that our Lord required from these Israelites something more than the Law did, that is, such a testimony of gratitude as had been offered by this alien; a claim which proves at least the Divinity of His mission. The ingratitude of the nine excites His surprise and regret. His language implies that they were Jews, and misery in this instance, seems to have united those who would otherwise have had no friendly dealings with one another.

While Jews and Samaritans had no friendly dealings with one another, the divine Saviour of all men gave evidence of His good will towards both; and, when we consider that His human nature was perfect, it does not surprise us that He did not act like any other Jew, but was free from all the prejudices of His age and country. These descendants of Assyrian idolaters, as far as we can judge, were better prepared for His reception than the children of Israel; and it is remarkable, that while the latter are dispersed over all the world, the small remnant of the former, from their settlement in the land, have continued under the mountain where their fathers worshipped. Their colonies in Egypt and

Syria are extinct, and their community, reduced to 120 individuals, is now confined to the valley of Naplouse. While the Jews have adopted the alphabet of their conquerors, they retain the original Hebrew one, in which they had received the Pentateuch; yet, like the Jews, they explain away the Prophecy of Shiloh, though they expect a Teacher like unto Moses, whom God shall raise up unto them like unto his brethren. Dr. Wilson, who visited them in 1843, was hospitably entertained by their High Priest, who, through Manasseh, who established their worship on Mount Gerizim, traces up his descent from Aaron; and he had demonstration of the strong antipathy which still keeps these followers of Moses apart, for the Jewish Rabbi spoke of them as the despicable Samaritans; and when he and his friends came to return the call of the traveller, the Samaritan High Priest called out, Who told these brutes to come hither?

98. *Jesus answers the question, when the kingdom of God shall come. Luke xvii. 20—37.*

The Pharisees enquiring when this reign of heaven, which Jesus had so often announced, would commence, He answered, that it would not be ushered in, as they conceived, with any outward display, for though unobserved, it had already come upon them before they were aware. He who was amongst them, was this expected Sovereign, but this was a fact overlooked by them, and He intimated that they would hereafter wish in vain for the opportunities which they had neglected; they would *desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man*. He then warned His disciples not to be deluded, as the nation would be, by false Messiahs, for He would come again after His sufferings and rejection, with the rapidity of lightning, and with the unexpectedness of the flood, and of the

overthrow of Sodom ; but as Noah and Lot were preserved in these general judgments, so He would interpose to separate His faithful followers from their companions. When asked the precise time of this visitation, He intimated by a proverb, that, as wherever a dead carcase lies, birds of prey will assemble to devour it ; so, when the measure of any nation's iniquity is full, Divine justice will reach it. They might therefore look for the destruction of Jerusalem in their own time, for this saying, and the observation that one labourer in the fields *would be taken and another left*, repeated as it is when the same calamity was again announced to take place within that generation, fix this prediction to a temporal judgment.

99. *The parables of the unjust judge, and of the Pharisee and Publican. Luke xviii. 1—14.*

Jesus next held forth strong encouragement to frequent earnest prayer by a Parable ; and as He had no scruple to propose for imitation the prudence of a dishonest steward, so he now compared the righteous Governor of the world with a Judge, who though influenced neither by fear of God, nor regard for man, was prevailed on to do right by an importunity that annoyed him ; thus drawing moral lessons from the vices as well as from the virtues of men. Some injudicious commentators extenuate the judge's faults, but the argument is convincing in proportion to his unworthiness ; for if even he, after a season, could be wearied, and teased into doing justice<sup>a</sup> to a widow, who was indifferent to him, will One, who is perfect in benevolence as well as justice, fail to answer the incessant cry of His own elect, whom he loves ? He not only puts it as a question which admits of but

<sup>a</sup> Ὑποπιάζειν, means literally *to strike under the eye* ; hence metaphorically, *to mortify*, (1 Cor. ix. 27.) and here *to stun or weary by continual importunity*.



one answer, but affirms it in the strongest manner. At the same time He intimated that He too, like the unjust judge, may leave his supplicants a long time under trouble and discouragements, but He does it only to try and to strengthen their faithfulness, and will grant their petition at the fittest season. The petition, we should remember, is not for what they may wish, but for the redress of wrong; and the context leads us to refer it to the deliverance in the day of the revelation of the Son of man which He had just before so awfully announced. His alarming enquiry, *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?* seems to be a warning that the trial will be so severe, that, as He tells them afterwards, *the love of many will wax cold*, and the very deliverance for which they prayed, when it arrived, would find few to welcome it. There appears then to be an especial reference to His Coming in judgment to destroy Jerusalem, but His question will also apply to His second Advent, which is to be preceded by an almost universal apostasy; and the reasoning shows, that the believers of all ages as well as of that, may take the encouragement of the Parable, as the character of the Judge of all the earth ever continues the same. The Parable of the unkind indolent neighbour, who was overcome by his friend's importunity, had recommended Intercessions for others, and this as powerfully enforces Prayer for ourselves. The prayer, however, that will be heard must not only be incessant, but of a proper nature, and must be offered in a right, that is an humble, spirit: and this he teaches in the most impressive manner by contrasting in another parable two worshippers, a Pharisee and a Publican, the representatives of two classes to be found in every age; the self-righteous, who, because they are not guilty of adultery, extortion, fraud, or other such heinous transgressions, are not only proud of their own virtue, but despise the other, that is, penitent sinners, who only plead for pardon. The religious

act of the Pharisee cannot be correctly called Prayer, for it contains neither deprecation of punishment nor supplication for benefits. It consists entirely of Thanksgiving, and that for his own merits, which he complacently enumerates, nor can he be content to commend himself, without condemning his fellow worshipper, whom he assumes to be unworthy. The address of the Publican, short as it is, contains both an acknowledgment of unworthiness, and a petition for pardon; and the word in which he begs for mercy, *ἰλάσθητι*, seems to express his hope of obtaining it through a propitiatory sacrifice. Both leave the temple in the frame in which they entered it. The result of their worship which themselves and the hearers could only conjecture, Jesus who knew it declared; and pronounced the admired Pharisee to be condemned, the despised Publican to be justified or accepted; thus teaching, that *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble*. The two are graphically sketched, as in a drawing, and from their air and manner we may anticipate their behaviour; the former stands by himself, realizing the Prophet's description, and seeming to say, *Stand aside, I am holier than thou*: the latter humbly keeps at a distance, presumes not to look up, and strikes upon his breast.

100. *Jesus is entertained at Bethany in the house of Martha.*  
*Luke x. 38—42.*

Our great Example has shown us by His conduct, that friendship is compatible with perfect philanthropy, for He is said to have loved John above His other disciples; and at Bethany lived a family to which He was particularly attached, Lazarus, and his sisters Martha and Mary. Jesus now visited them on His way to Jerusalem, and having entered as

usual upon some edifying discourse, Mary, delighted with the opportunity, sat down at His feet, as was the custom of disciples, to profit from His instructions, but Martha, like many engaged in the bustle of active life, was so immoderately anxious to provide a suitable entertainment for so illustrious a guest, that she would have had every other occupation give way to hers, and was displeased with her sister for not coming to help her. She appealed to Jesus Himself, and expostulated with Him upon the supposed impropriety of her sister's conduct; but our perfect Teacher viewed it in a different light, and addressing Martha with a tender repetition of her name, observed that she was disquieted about many things less worthy of her anxiety, and that, while she was busy in providing a needless plenty of the food that perisheth, her sister had chosen the better part, by seizing on the opportunity afforded of spiritual improvement, the effect of which was permanent, and would not be taken away. Though Martha was on this occasion faulty, yet she was a true believer, and her complaint arose in part at least out of regard to Him. We may therefore suppose that this affectionate reproof had its proper effect. Jesus could not be displeased with her desire of showing Him all the respect in her power; but Mary's listening to His teaching was more acceptable to Him, whose meat and drink was to do the will of His heavenly Father.

101. *Jesus attends the Feast of the Dedication; but declaring Himself and the Father to be one, the Jews attempt to stone Him for Blasphemy, and He is obliged to retire beyond Jordan. John x. 22—42.*

After a two months' absence, Jesus, notwithstanding the danger He had been exposed to on His last visit, returned to

Jerusalem for the feast of the Dedication of the Temple ; which we learn from Josephus, continued to be celebrated in his time with much solemnity<sup>b</sup>, and is still, notwithstanding its destruction, kept by the Jews. We may infer from our Lord's attending it, that He does not disapprove of the institution in His Church of memorials of special national mercies.

This feast commenced on the fifth of December, and lasted eight days. It being winter, and the weather perhaps stormy<sup>c</sup>, Jesus was walking in the colonnade on the east side ; the usual place of resort for Jewish worshippers, called after Solomon, but no part of the original building, though the substructure of it of immense stones, so much admired by Josephus, might have been raised by that Sovereign. The rulers came to Him here, and asked Him how long He meant to keep them in a painful state of suspense, by speaking of Himself as the *Light of the world*, the *Door of the sheep*, and the *Good Shepherd*, without plainly avowing without a figure that He was the Messiah. To this He answered, that He had told them, (at least in effect,) but that if He had not, His miracles were a sufficient declaration. But because they were not His sheep, they would not believe, whereas His sheep hear His voice, and follow Him ; they would never perish of their own accord, nor would any enemy be able to force them away from Him ; for His Father, whose power was irresistible, had given them to Him, and He was One with Him. One we must understand not in person but in being, and consequently both in will and power<sup>d</sup>. His conclusion, that being one with the omnipotent Father, He was able to defend His sheep against all enemies, sufficiently proves that He meant to claim divine

<sup>b</sup> Ant. xii. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Χειμών, meaning both storm and winter, is probably here used for the former.

<sup>d</sup> He uses the neuter not the masculine, [ἐν, not εἰς,] one, not in person, but in substance, that is, in Deity, including of course unity of will.

power, and the Jews deemed His claim Blasphemy, as it certainly would have been, had He been a mere man; and their preparing to stone Him, as on a former occasion, is the best exposition of His words. Our Lord, in His intercession for us, prays that all His disciples may be One, as He and the Father are One; but there the context shows, since they are men and His Father God, that He must be speaking of unity of will and disposition, while here it is as plain that the attribute referred to is power. They then expressly declared, that they would stone Him, because He made Himself God. Our Lord did not deny the charge, yet, not judging it proper at that time to bring that mysterious truth into discussion, lest He should farther irritate them, He showed that in a subordinate sense their Law called men gods\*, meaning their priests and magistrates, who were types of the Deity; and therefore they had no right to object to the title of Son of God being claimed by one whom the Father had consecrated in a higher degree, and for a higher purpose. To this He added, that they might have had reason for refusing credit to His words, if He did not do the works of His Father; but if He gave that evidence of almighty power, though they disregarded His testimony, they ought not to despise His credentials, but acknowledge them, that they might know that the Father was in Him, and He in the Father. The context must decide the nature of the union of which He speaks. He had just said as Messiah, *The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of Me.* Therefore, in justifying Himself by the Scripture in taking the name of God, He only meant to refute the charge of blasphemy, not to deny that it belonged to Him also in the higher sense. And that they so understood Him appears from their not being satisfied with His explanation, and His being obliged to withdraw from their violence.

\* As in Psalm lxxii.

The discourse was abruptly closed by their endeavour to seize Him; and the mildness and meekness of our Lord's replies, even while they were endeavouring to destroy Him, are the more worthy to fix our attention, as we often see the most exemplary of His followers exasperated by malicious opposition, very far short of the violence to which He was continually exposed, and which He always endured with perfect patience. He then retired to Bethabara, where John had originally baptized; and His ministry there of some months, in a part of the country in which He had not taught before, was attended with great success; many of the people, who remembered John's testimony to Him, believing on Him in consequence.

102. *Jesus restores Lazarus to life. John xi. 1—47.*

Jesus was recalled into the vicinity of Jerusalem by Martha and Mary, who entreated Him, by His affection for their brother, who was dangerously ill, to come and cure him. However, contrary to their expectations, on hearing of the sickness of Lazarus, He remained two days where He was, to allow time for his death. His delay would excite anxiety, and perhaps hard thoughts of Him in this family which was dear to Him, and for a season it greatly augmented their distress; but if they and His disciples had attended to His answer, they would have been prepared for the result, for He declared that *the sickness was not unto death*, and afterwards that *He would awake him out of sleep*. The event showed the fitness of His proceeding, for the ensuing miracle redounded more to His glory and their benefit, than an immediate compliance with their request. His delay must also have given pain to Himself, for on witnessing the weeping of the sisters and their friends, He shed tears. On this occasion, and when meditating on the impending ruin of His country,

He is recorded to have given way to His feelings; thus proving, contrary to the theory of some moral philosophers, that both friendship and patriotism are compatible with perfect virtue. He now not only shed tears, but groaned twice. According to some, from the misery which sin had brought into the world; according to others, at the unbelief shown even at this advanced period of His ministry. We may adopt both opinions, supposing that it was both for sin, and for their incredulity; for when He ordered the stone to be removed from the tomb, even Martha's faith and hope seem to have died away again. On the third day He intimated His purpose of returning; and this surprised His disciples, who doubted whether He would be able to protect Himself and them from the rage of His enemies. He answered in figurative language, implying, that as men labour and travel securely while the sun affords light, but are liable to stumble in the dark; so He was safe, and ought to walk in His vocation during His allotted period. The Apostles accompanied Him, agreeing in sentiment with Thomas, who declared his intention to die with Him rather than desert Him. Jesus did not arrive till the fourth day after the death of His friend. As the village was scarcely two miles from Jerusalem, many of the inhabitants came to condole with the sisters; and this circumstance was overruled to make the miracle more extensively known, and more fully attested. Martha, on hearing of His arrival, left the company to meet and welcome Him at some distance; and expressed her assurance, that He both could and would have cured her brother if He had been on the spot. She seems to have had a faint hope of her brother's restoration to life, but she addressed Him only as a Prophet who wrought miracles by faith and prayer, not as the incarnate God, who commanded by His own omnipotence. He assured her that Lazarus should rise again, and she declared her belief in the general Resurrection.

To enlarge her expectations, and to bring her to a right idea of His real character, He informed her that He was the Author of the Resurrection and of Life; and such was the constraining influence of His words, that she acknowledged Him for the Messiah. She immediately went to call her sister, evidently having now a strong expectation excited, that He who had announced Himself as the Author of life, would restore it to her brother. Mary accompanied her, and addressed Him in the same words as her sister: and her friends, following, presuming she was gone to weep at the grave, brought, accidentally as it were, a numerous party to witness this most convincing of Miracles. It was too evident to be denied, and our Lord was desirous that they should draw from it the proper conclusion, that He was sent from God. For this reason He first prayed, and His prayer is thanksgiving to His Father, that He always heard Him, anticipating, as if already wrought, the miracle which He then performed, by calling Lazarus out of the tomb; who at the call came forth again alive, after he had been dead four days. Many of the spectators believed, that is the conclusion that Jesus wished them to draw; for the fact of Lazarus's resurrection none could deny. Others, who were governed by an implacable enmity, immediately reported the event to the rulers, who (such was their infatuation and wickedness) summoned a council to consider how they might best destroy Him, at the very time that they confessed that He had wrought not only this, but many Miracles. This last surprising one was the cause of their coming to this decision, as we learn from St. John, the only Evangelist that records it.

There is a tradition, that Lazarus was then a young man, and that he survived our Lord thirty years<sup>f</sup>; and this Miracle is supposed to have been omitted by the earlier Evangelists,

<sup>f</sup> Recorded by Epiphanius, Hæres. 65. §. 54.



upon the same principle as St. Peter's being the disciple who cut off Malchus's ear, lest it should have exposed him to persecution. Jesus retired in consequence to Ephraim, but continued His usual occupation of teaching and working miraculous cures.

103. *Jesus answers the question of the Pharisees concerning Divorce. Matt. xix. 3—12. Mark x. 1—12.*

The next snare contrived by the Pharisees to entrap Jesus, was to obtain His opinion upon Divorce. The Rabbis were divided into two parties upon this question, so He could not decide in favour of either without giving offence to the other. The school of Shammah had determined that a wife ought not to be divorced, except for some gross misconduct, or some bodily defect unknown before marriage; while that of Hillel, who had only lately died, maintained that the will of the husband was a sufficient cause. This determination was the more popular. Long before, the author of the Apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus had said, *If a wife go not as thou wouldest have her, cut her off from thy flesh, give her a bill of divorce, and let her go.* (xxv. 26.) And Josephus acknowledges, that he himself put away his, after she had borne him three children, because he was not pleased with her manners. (Ant. iv. 8.) Our Saviour, as before, declared that Adultery, which violates this sacred contract, is the only justifiable cause, and He showed that His decision was just, by referring to the history of the institution of Marriage, which was appointed by God Himself in Paradise before sin and death had entered. *In the beginning, God created a male and a female.* Now if a plurality of wives, or a succession of them at the discretion of the husband, that is, in other words, if either Polygamy or Divorce, except for Adultery, were to be allowed, God, instead of saying, that

this one man and one woman should be one flesh, would have made several wives for Adam. The words in Genesis are supposed by some to be those of Adam, by others those of Moses, because our progenitor could know nothing of the relation of parents and children; they are here said to be those of God, and whether spoken by Him directly, or as inspiring either of the others to speak, they equally contain a divine command. To this our Saviour added the proper corollary, *What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* They then asked why Moses had *commanded* divorce. To this Jesus replied, that he had only *permitted* it; that is, they were suffered without punishment by the magistrate to put away their wives, because they might otherwise from their hardness of heart have treated them ill; but that it was a departure from the original institution, which should not be tolerated under the more perfect dispensation of the Gospel. Both sexes are put by our Lord upon a level, as it is declared to be as much adultery for the husband to take another wife as for the wife to take another husband. The disciples, who partook of the prejudices of their countrymen, supposed, that if marriage was indissoluble except for this one cause, it would be better not to marry. It follows, that in a case in which divorce is lawful, it is lawful to marry again; but the Church of Rome, having exalted Marriage into a Sacrament, has rendered it perpetual; and as our Reformation never extended to Ecclesiastical Law, Divorce in England can only be obtained by authority of Parliament. Celibacy is regarded by that Church as a council of perfection for the laity, and is required by her from the clergy; there is however nothing in Scripture to disparage matrimony, which was even enjoined to the Jewish priests, and is declared in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 4.) *to be honourable in all.* Those to Timothy and Titus certainly assume, that Christian Ministers will in

general have wives; and in the first to the Corinthians, which is the stronghold of the advocates of celibacy, St. Paul only gives it as his opinion, that *it is good for the present distress*. Even here he adds, *but if thou marry thou hast not sinned*; and both his conclusion and our Lord's reply show, that continency is a gift granted only to some, and that none but those can innocently choose a single life<sup>g</sup>.

104. *Jesus blesses Children.* *Matt.* xix. 13, 14. *Mark* x. 13—16. *Luke* xix. 15—17.

Children were now brought to Jesus by their parents, that He might bless them. Luke calls them *βρέφη*, *infants*; and we learn from Mark, that they were young enough to be taken up in His arms. As they were in health, they needed no bodily cure; and being too young to learn, must have been brought to receive a spiritual blessing. The imposition of hands was used by the Jews in the invocation of the Holy Spirit, by such as stood in any superior relation to others, or were esteemed of peculiar sanctity, and no doubt these parents must have regarded Jesus as a prophet at least. The passage is introduced into our Baptismal Service for infants, and seems to sanction as strongly as any thing can, short of a positive command, the custom which has prevailed from the beginning, of admitting the children of believers into the Church. Indeed a positive command was not necessary; for as children had been taken into covenant with God by the rite of Circumcision under the Mosaic as under the patriarchal dispensation; the Apostles, as Jews, would, as a matter of course, have administered to them Baptism, unless they had been expressly forbidden. On this occasion they rebuked the

<sup>g</sup> Heb. xiii. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 26.

parents, but their Master reproved them, and again recommended children as examples of the qualities He required in His followers, teaching by a living parable, as it were, Innocence and Humility.

105. *Jesus answers a rich young man, who enquires what he is to do to inherit eternal life, and takes occasion to warn His disciples against Covetousness. The Parable of the Labourers hired at different hours. Matt. xix. 16—30. xxi. 1—16. Mark x. 17—31. Luke xviii. 18—30.*

A young Ruler, who was exceedingly rich, now came running to Jesus, and kneeling down, enquired what good thing he must do to procure eternal life. Jesus answered him in the same manner as he had done the Lawyer, by referring him to the moral Law, *If thou art willing to enter into life, keep the commandments.* But they were men of different characters; the Lawyer spoke to ensnare Him, or at best to obtain His praise; the Ruler honestly sought instruction, and though he preferred the pleasures of life to the self-denying service of Christ, and went away, it was sorrowfully, and with a heart divided between heavenly and earthly treasure. Jesus, it is added, *loved him.* His inclination therefore must have been good, but he had not resolution to act upon the conviction of his judgment. We hear no more of him: yet the conversation could not fail to humble him, and it is possible that he might hereafter submit to the test of his sincerity required, and make the sacrifice of his very great possessions. Our Saviour, in order to show him how low an estimate he had formed of morality, first objected to his giving Him, whom he conceived to be no more than a man, the title of “good,” as all men are naturally evil, and, accurately speaking, God alone is

good. The young man ignorantly enquired, according to the popular notion of the casuists of his day, who taught that they might select one of God's commandments, which of them he was to keep; whereas the perfect fulfilment of all is the indispensable condition, if salvation is not to be bestowed as a gift, but claimed as the recompense of works. Our Saviour, passing over those of the first Table, repeated those of the second<sup>h</sup>. The Ruler, blinded by self-love, replied, that he had constantly observed them all. To detect the pride and ignorance which lurked under this plausible appearance, He told him that there was yet one thing wanting—he must sell all his property, give it to the poor, and become His follower. The similar injunction of our Lord to His Apostles, *Provide neither gold nor silver in your purses*, read out in the Church at Assissi twelve centuries after it was uttered, so impressed the heart of a young Enthusiast, that it led him to the foundation of the second order of Mendicant Friars, A.D. 1210; but we must not, with St. Francis, draw from it the conclusion, that a renunciation of property, and the vow of poverty, are the best means of attaining Christian perfection. This literal interpretation is not in harmony with the general teaching of our Lord, and would be a blameable throwing up of our stewardship before the time assigned by Him who has said, *Occupy till I come*. He only spake to the particular case before Him; and His words as a touchstone brought forward the young ruler's besetting sin, Covetousness; and taught him, that, notwithstanding his professions, his great property was dearer to him than the commands of a Teacher whom he had just denominated good.

His behaviour is a melancholy illustration of the pernicious influence of wealth, and afforded Jesus an occasion of

<sup>h</sup> It is remarkable that our Lord did not cite them in their original order, and that they are differently arranged by the Evangelists. The Tenth, omitted by Luke, Matthew paraphrases by, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, and Mark translates it, *Defraud not*.

stating the extreme difficulty and apparent impossibility of the salvation of the rich. He of course must be understood to speak generally; and the experience of every age has but too abundantly evinced, that though a few of the opulent may regard their property as a trust for which they are accountable, and make it the blessed means of relieving the distressed, and advancing their Master's cause, riches have proved to the majority an irresistible temptation to sin. The cares they bring with them have a tendency to draw off the affections from their proper object, the Creator. Hoarded, they beget covetousness; enjoyed, they encourage self-indulgence, both so fatal to spirituality; and on either supposition they nourish arrogance, and often, being trusted in for protection instead of God, make their owners guilty of a practical idolatry. The disciples, who felt only the temptations of the poor, and seem also to have thought that the rich were more favourably situated for the attainment of future happiness, expressed their astonishment. Jesus explained, according to St. Luke, that He meant those who trust in their wealth; and we know, that through the influence of the Holy Spirit, it is possible to act upon the Apostle's charge, (1 Tim. vi. 17.) and to be *not high minded*, but to transfer this trust from *uncertain riches to the living God*. Even in that age of peculiar difficulty, a Nicodemus, a Joseph of Arimathea, a Joanna, and a Manaen, are proofs that it was not impossible for the rich to enter into the kingdom of heaven. His answer showed, that the mere possession of wealth does not necessarily exclude the proprietor; yet it was so worded as to alarm the wealthy with a sense of their danger, and to check in others the desire of owning what our great Poet calls

the toil of fools,

The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare; more apt  
To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,  
Than prompt her to do ought may merit praise.

Par. R. ii. 453.

Jesus expressed Himself figuratively. *It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*<sup>1</sup>. Among the many indirect benefits derived from Christianity, is the correction of our judgment upon moral topics. Though few, perhaps, go the whole length of our Lord's determination as to the injurious tendency of wealth, none now seem disposed to rank it among those things that recommend us to the favour of God; and yet when worship consisted in sacrifice, it was natural to suppose that he whose circumstances enabled him to make more frequent and more costly offerings, would be preferred to his poorer brother. In such an age it would be difficult to persuade men, especially the rich, that the sacrifice required by God was a *broken and a contrite spirit*, and that praise and thanksgiving would please Him better than *a bullock that hath horns and hoofs*<sup>2</sup>. (Psalm lxxix. 31.)

Our Lord's speech led the Apostles to reflect, that what He had enjoined they had done—left all, and followed Him; and Peter with his usual forwardness, and apparently with some self-complacency, asked what would be their reward. As his motive was, however, substantially right, Jesus overlooked its alloy, and replied, that not they alone, but all who

<sup>1</sup> The saying is expressed in terms so contrary to European taste, that critics have suggested a different reading, but the use of a similar in the Talmud shows that it is a favourite one in the East. *Κάμιλος*, a cable, is substituted by Theophylact for *Κάμηλος*, but his conjecture is not supported by any manuscript. In Syriac and Arabic, the two words as in Greek differed only in the vowels, but in the Koran it is pointed so as to mean cable. (vii. 38.)

<sup>2</sup> If such were the tendency of sacrificial worship under a divine dispensation, which has carefully kept spirituality of mind in view, how pernicious must it practically prove under the corruptions of paganism. A striking illustration is afforded by this passage from a celebrated Sanscrit work, the *Hitopadesa*, the original of Pilpay's fables, "Knowledge produceth humility, from humility proceedeth worthiness, from worthiness riches are acquired, *from riches religion*, and thence happiness." What a comment upon the words, *The poor have the Gospel preached to them*!

for His sake sacrificed their earthly treasure and connections, should even here, notwithstanding persecution, enjoy a hundred-fold greater happiness, even of the same kind, than others, and in the next world eternal life. To some at least of those to whom it was originally addressed, this promise may be said to have been literally fulfilled; for instead of one house which they had forsaken, wherever they made converts they found several; instead of a few brothers after the flesh, many spiritual ones; for sons, all whom they should convert; for possessions of their own, the use of the property of all believers; *as having nothing, and yet possessing all things!* To them especially He said, according to St. Matthew, that in the Regeneration<sup>k</sup> or Renewal of the world, in that *new earth in which*, purified by fire, *dwellleth Righteousness*, (2 Peter iii. 13.) when He Himself should sit on His glorious throne, they should be peculiarly honoured, for they should *sit upon twelve thrones, judging* [or ruling<sup>l</sup>] *the twelve tribes of Israel*. He added, *Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first*; and illustrated His meaning by a Parable, the scope of which is not apparent, but the key to it must be sought in this saying, which is repeated at the close of it. A Householder is described as going out in the dawn of the morning to hire Labourers for his Vineyard, and agreeing with them for the usual sum of a denarius for the day's work. Again, at the third, the sixth, the ninth, and even at the eleventh hour, he went for this purpose to the market, where then, as now in

<sup>k</sup> This Παλιγγενεσία so translated, as a Regeneration not only of men but of things, may be connected with either clause, but it is I think better suited to the second, since it was rather prepared than effected by our Lord's personal preaching, and this is supported by Mark xii. 23.

<sup>l</sup> The word will bear this sense, which here seems most appropriate. The Judges of Israel, like the Consuls of Carthage, who were distinguished by the same Phœnician title, Shophetim, rendered by Livy *Suffetes*, were not what we should call Judges, but Rulers.



the east, labourers waited to be hired. He engaged them, but not according to the former specified rate, but for whatever he should judge right. The last (and we may presume all the intermediate ones, though as usual in parables omitted) received also a denarius. They were paid first, and in consequence those who had agreed for that sum murmured, and were indignant that they who had *borne the burden and heat of the day*, should be treated like those who had worked but a single hour. *May I not do what I like with mine own?* is the householder's reply. If the complaint appears to us not unreasonable, it must be because we like them have an evil eye, that is, are envious of others, and forget that though they have worked a much shorter time in their Master's service, their reward is not greater than ours, and where the service is perfect freedom, if there be any cause for regret, it is for them to lament that they were not engaged in it sooner. He who hires labourers, if he pay them their stipulated wages, cannot be charged with injustice, though out of his liberality he bestow the same as a gift upon others who work less, were it but for one hour. In the same manner our great Master, if He should grant the same remuneration to all, whether called to serve Him in the morning, the noon, or the evening of life, cannot be justly blamed. It is true that some will have reason to magnify His bounty, but none can complain of wrong. The Parable is commonly explained of the call of the Gentiles, but the more it is examined, the less applicable does it appear to be to them in contradistinction to the Jews; though cases might be found, as indeed among the Jews too, of persons whom the knowledge of Christianity has reached late in life. It is applied by many to individual believers at different periods, an application which is sanctioned by eminent names. This explanation, however, is liable to great abuse; for it may lead a reader to think that he may innocently wait till hired

by some special act of Providence; whereas in a Christian country, whoever has been admitted by Baptism into the Church, was then sent into the vineyard. The parable also will not suit this case, for it presupposes that those called at the eleventh hour had been idle so long unwillingly, and we may fairly suppose that they worked the more heartily, in consequence of the short duration of their engagement. The connection of the Parable with the preceding speech of the Apostle, *We have forsaken all and followed Thee*, seems to limit it to the Ministers of Christ, at most to laymen appointed to particular offices. Whatever interpretation we adopt, the remark twice made, *many are called but few are chosen*, deserves our most serious consideration, that, not content with the possession of church privileges, we may *give all diligence to make our calling and election sure*. God looks not so much to the length or nature of our services as to their earnestness: He considers less what we have accomplished than what we are, what we work than what has been wrought in us. The Apostles seem to have thought, that they who were first called into our Lord's vineyard, would be necessarily more willing and more able than any that came after. He subjoined what is said on other occasions: *Many are called, but few are chosen*. Many become members of the visible Church, but they who *receive the love of the Truth*, appear to have been at all times a *little flock*.

106. *Jesus again foretels His own death. Matt. xx. 17—19.*

*Mark x. 32—34. Luke xviii. 31—34.*

The rulers, on the resurrection of Lazarus, had issued a Proclamation against Jesus. His disciples therefore were alarmed, as He was now returning to Jerusalem, in order to keep the Passover. They were indeed in immediate

expectation of the establishment of His Kingdom, but they had recently heard of the difficulty of the rich entering into it, and they knew that the rulers were opposed to Him. Jesus endeavoured to prepare them for the event that was to usher it in, reminding them that His ministry would close at Jerusalem, and plainly told them, what He had before obscurely intimated, that according to the Scriptures He would be betrayed to the chief priests and Pharisees; but as they had no longer the power of inflicting capital punishment, they would deliver Him up to the Gentiles, that is, to the Roman government, and that He would be put to death according to their custom by Crucifixion. Humanly speaking, it seemed far more probable, that instead of making His death a public and a national act, His enemies would have privately killed Him. Such indeed we know was their intention; but it was overruled by God, who in His Providence led them voluntarily to accomplish their object by the means which ancient Prophecy had darkly hinted, and His Son now plainly declared. He was to be mocked as a fool, to be scourged as an offender, to be spit upon as a blasphemer, and to be crucified as a criminal. His declaration, that all that was to happen to Him had been foretold, ought to have strengthened their faith, especially as His suffering was to end in His triumph, His Resurrection on the third day. But they understood Him not, though He had spoken without disguise, because, like the rest of His countrymen, they mistook His second advent for the first, and could not be brought to believe, till He afterwards opened their hearts to comprehend the then unwelcome truth, which they were yet so *slow of heart to believe*, that Christ must *suffer*, and then *enter into His glory*.

107. *The Mother of James and John begs for them the highest places in the Redeemer's kingdom. Matt. xx. 20—28. Mark x. 35—45.*

Salome and her sons, thinking only of a temporal sovereignty, now came to solicit from Him the highest places of dignity and authority. He answered, that they understood not the nature of their request, for the offices and honours He had to bestow would expose those that obtained them to a proportionate share of suffering; and He inquired if they could drink of His cup, and undergo the sufferings in which He was about to be baptized, that is, immersed? Either they did not comprehend His meaning, or were too self-confident, when they replied, that they were able. In answer He observed, that the honour they coveted would be conferred on those to whom it had been assigned by His Father, but that still their declaration should be fulfilled. James accordingly was the first Apostle that suffered martyrdom; (Acts xii. 2.) and though his brother died a natural death at an advanced age, his sufferings were sufficient to justify the expression, he having been, according to his own testimony, in Patmos, (Rev. i. 9.) *a companion of Christ's tribulation*. The application proves, that as yet, at least, no preeminence had been promised to Peter. The ten were as ambitious as these two, and were in consequence displeased with them. Our Lord condescended to interfere, and point out the essential difference between the rulers of this world and those of His kingdom. The former domineered and tyrannized over their subjects, but whoever aspired to eminence among them, must be distinguished by humility and self-denial, and by ministering unto his brethren, if required, even to death, of which He was setting the example. He who would be great among you, let him become your *servant*, διάκονος, and

he who would be the first, your *slave*, δοῦλος; and such being the way of obtaining the highest dignity in His kingdom, He might well tell these brothers, that they knew not what they asked.

108. *Jesus restores the sight of Bartimæus. Matt. xx. 29—34.*

*Mark x. 46—52. Luke xviii. 35—43.*

Jesus had not taken the direct road to Jerusalem, but came by Jericho, which had been called the City of Palms, from the abundance of those trees now all but extinct in Palestine, and was then reckoned the second in importance. He seems to have passed through it, only stopping to restore two blind beggars to sight. One only is mentioned by Mark and Luke, but they do not say that there was but one, and the discrepancy of their account from Matthew's may be explained, on the supposition that Bar Timæus, that is, the son of Timæus, who is named by Mark, was, either on his own account, or his father's, more known. There is also a difference of still less importance, respecting the locality of the miracle, which according to Luke took place when they were near Jericho; according to the other Evangelists, as they left it; but as the three agree that Jesus was then attended by a multitude, it was most probably on leaving the town, where it seems to have collected. The son of Timæus besought Jesus as the Messiah to have pity on him, and though rebuked, he persevered in his cry till he had attracted His attention. Being called by Him, he threw off the cloak in which he was wrapped, and rising up ran to meet Him. He obtained the blessing that he solicited, with the assurance that he owed it to his faith, and the same faith which had restored to him his sight, conferred upon him spiritual illumination, for he followed this Son and Lord of David, praising God.

109. *Jesus lodges at the house of Zacchæus, and relates the Parable of the Pounds. Luke xix. 1—27.*

As He was passing on, Zacchæus, a chief publican, (that is, one who farmed the taxes of a district,) felt a natural curiosity to see so extraordinary a person. Being, however, *little of stature*, and unable to gratify his wish on account of the accompanying crowd, he climbed for that purpose into the branches of a spreading tree<sup>m</sup>. There he not only saw but was seen, for Jesus looking up invited Himself to his house, which seems to have been out of the city. Upon this he immediately came down, and joyfully prepared an entertainment. The crowd murmured, because our Lord selected the house of this sinner, in preference to that of a person of greater respectability; and some commentators, partaking of the prejudices of this crowd, endeavour to show, that, if a sinner, his sin has been overrated; yet in proportion as they reduce his guilt, they lower the mercy of the Saviour, whose speech<sup>n</sup> *concerning him, The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*, shows that Zacchæus was not only of reputed bad character, but at least in a degree deserved it. He stood forth in the midst of the company, avowing publicly his intention of making the most liberal compensation to any he might have defrauded, and, as in many cases restitution would be impracticable, he declared his intention of giving half the remainder of his income to the poor. The confession proved his faith to be genuine, and his repentance to be sincere. He is said to be rich, and his conduct is honour-

<sup>m</sup> Not our Sycamore, called in some places the great Maple, *Acer Pseudo-Platanus*, but a species of figtree bearing leaves like a Mulberry, as its name *Ficus Sycomorus* denotes, which is indigenous in Egypt and Palestine. The Sicamine tree is our Mulberry.

<sup>n</sup> The context shows that *πρὸς* should be here so translated, as in Rom. x. 21.

ably contrasted with that of the young ruler, perhaps as an instance, that what is impossible to man, is easy to Him who can speak to the heart, and turn it as He will. Zacchæus called upon any whom he might have injured by false accusations, and undertook to settle with them not according to the Code of his own people, which required at the most no more than restitution with the addition of a fifth, (Numbers v. 7.) but four-fold, according to the more rigid determination of the Roman Law.

This progress of our Lord through the holy land was more public than any former one. He was attended not only by His disciples, but also by a train of followers attracted by His miracles from all the towns through which He passed, and this, on leaving so populous a city as Jericho, had grown to a vast multitude. As He was now so near Jerusalem, they flattered themselves that He was at last about to assume His Sovereignty; but as that was reserved for another period, and He now went up to be offered as a Sacrifice, it became expedient to correct their erroneous expectations; and as He could not do this in plain terms without declaring Himself to be the Messiah, He related the Parable of the Pounds, which is so contrived, that He combined in it the conduct of His opponents and His professed servants during this state of trial, with His treatment of both on His return to judgment.

Jesus accordingly described Himself under the figure of a Nobleman, who sets out for a foreign country to have His title confirmed by a higher authority. Such conduct was not uncommon in that age of Roman supremacy, and the Jews had had a recent example of it in their last monarch Archelaus. Not only did he visit Rome for this purpose, but his countrymen sent an embassy to the Emperor with the hope of preventing his appointment, and were many of them, as in the parable, put to death by him on his successful return,

when we may presume that he also rewarded his adherents. Thus our Lord, instead of taking immediate possession of His sovereignty, would ascend to His Father, and after a long season would come again to punish His enemies, and to reckon with His servants. To ten of these He had entrusted, not as in our translation a Pound, but a Mina each, [about nine pounds sterling,] with a charge to make profit by it. The first by trading gained ten, the second five; and the king's munificence is shown by his large recompense of the faithful employment of so small a sum. One however had carefully laid his by in a napkin, and had not only disobeyed but vindicated his disobedience by reproaching his Master. In St. Matthew's Gospel we have instead the Parable of the Talents, so similar in its general features, that it has been considered as identical; but though similar, it is not the same. That was told later, and only to a few of the Apostles; this to a mixed multitude, which might include future opponents, and therefore takes notice of His enemies. There is also an essential difference: in that the deposits are unequal, but the rate of profit equal, for both the five and the two talents are doubled; in this the deposits are equal, but the gain differs. Some commentators therefore understand by the Pounds, Grace which is bestowed upon all Christians in equal measure, and by the Talents, the gifts of intellect, property, and power, which are avowedly unequally distributed as the Owner sees fit. We learn from these Parables, that we are all God's servants, responsible for the grace or gifts committed to us, and for no more. The treatment of those placed over ten and five cities teaches us, that the future reward of the obedient will be in proportion to their diligence; and that of him who returned the pound as it was, that neither mean abilities nor imperfect knowledge can justify inactivity in God's service. And yet notwithstanding the warnings given them in the reply to the slothful



servant, there are still persons who deem it sufficient to abstain from positive sin, and regard the gracious Giver of what they have, as a severe and unreasonable taskmaster, in requiring more than that they should not abuse His gifts; like one who should claim to reap the field which he has not sown, or to take up the pledge which he did not deposit. But this unprofitable servant was condemned out of his own mouth. The very character he falsely ascribed to his Master should have stimulated him to exertion, and if he were unable to augment his capital by trade like the two first, he would have satisfied the owner by putting out his pound to a banker, who would have returned it with interest. This we may assume had been done by the other seven, of whom we hear no more, and the alternative offered refutes his apology, and renders him inexcusable. In both parables, the neglected sum is given to the servant who traded with most success. This in that of the pounds excites in the king's attendants surprise, and probably displeasure; but they are assured, that it was the principle of Christ's administration to take away from those who have neglected, and to give to those who have improved, the deposit entrusted to them. From this and other passages of Scripture we may infer, that in the next life as in this, there will be a diversity of offices; but though some of these will be more important than others, they who occupy the lowest may be as happy, as those placed in the highest, and if removed to it would be unhappy, since all will there be in those which are suited to their inclinations and ability; and he who is inferior to others in intellectual powers, will be as satisfied in performing the work assigned to him, as he who having a larger grasp of mind accomplishes grander designs.

Interest, which was applied to the appointed rate of profit, ten per cent, when the practice of gaining by the loan of money was rendered legal in our country by Henry the

Eighth, is a preferable word to Usury, since that, having long been restricted to the amount which the law forbade as exorbitant, has acquired a bad meaning. Strange as it may seem to us who live in an age when sounder notions prevail, it is a fact, that the taking any interest was formerly universally condemned, both by moralists and political economists. Aristotle<sup>o</sup> and his great rival Bacon<sup>p</sup> were alike unfriendly to what the first was pleased to condemn in his *Politics*, as “the worst and most unnatural of modes of accumulation, and the utmost corruption of artificial degeneracy, which adds nothing to the common stock, only enriching one at the expense of another;” and the second, in his *History of Henry VII.* speaks of “good and politic Laws made in Parliament against Usury, the bastard use of money<sup>q</sup>;” though in his *Essay* on the subject, he inconsistently suggests regulations for it, observing, that it is better to mitigate it by declaration, than to suffer it to rage by connivance. The School divines strangely brand it as contrary to Nature as well as to Revelation, and Canon Law condemns it as a mortal sin, and punishes it with excommunication. A misconception of the Mosaic prohibition, now at length understood to be a political not a moral precept, since it allowed Israelites to take interest from strangers, and moreover an excessive deference to the authority of Aristotle, have no less biassed the judgment of the earlier Protestant divines; and among our own, I know of none, previous to the Revolution, who do not regard the lending on interest, if not sinful, yet as of a questionable character<sup>q</sup>. “Usury,” says Aristotle, “by transferring merely the same object from one land to another, generates money from money, and the interest thus generated is called *τόκος*, *offspring*, as being precisely of the same

<sup>o</sup> *Politics*, i. 6.

<sup>p</sup> *Life of Henry VII.* p. 66.

<sup>q</sup> Dugald Stewart's *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers*, vol. i. p. 180.

nature and the same substance with that from which it proceeds. This argument, “the natural barrenness of money,” is unworthy of that great philosopher, and is as valid against the rent of houses, or remuneration for a loan of any other article. He must have been misled by the etymology of *τόκος*, the Greek word for *interest*, which implies that the principal generates the interest, and that it is, as, in Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, Antonio insultingly tells Shylock, “a breed,” “a breed of barren metal;” or it may be only an instance of the too common fault of seeking for reasons for a prejudice already adopted. The prejudices against taking interest for money among the ancient philosophers, were the natural result of the state of Society, which fell under their observation. In countries where there is little commerce, the great motive for borrowing being necessity, the value of a loan cannot be ascertained by calculation, as it may be where it is procured to carry on trade, and in such every money-lender will be regarded in the same odious light that a pawnbroker is with us. Whereas in those where it is borrowed for a mercantile purpose, the borrowers are often the rich, the lenders the comparatively poor. The prohibition of interest to the Jews in their mutual transactions, was in perfect consistency with the principles of their political code which discouraged commerce, and prevented mortgages, by the indefeasible right which every man had to his land, its object being to make them an agricultural people, with as much equality in every respect as is compatible with social order. Calvin<sup>r</sup> is, I believe, the first who confuted this sophistry, and maintained that the practice must be determined by the rule of equity. It is satisfactory to observe, that on this as on other subjects, the

<sup>r</sup> In an Epistle quoted in a note in Dugald Stewart’s *Dissertation on the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical, and Political Philosophy*, prefixed to the *Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Word of God and the dictates of sound reason coincide; and that the former fairly examined will be found to give no countenance, even in a parable, to any erroneous position, though the best and wisest of uninspired men may have maintained it.

110. *Jesus proceeds from Jericho to Bethany, where He is entertained in the house of Simon the Leper. Matt. xxvi. 6—13. Mark xiv. 1—9. Luke xxii. 1—6. John xi. 47—57. xii. 1—11.*

The Jews, who had gone up to Jerusalem to purify themselves preparatory to eating the passover, sought Jesus from various motives, and asked one another if He would have courage to show Himself, since a proclamation for His apprehension had been published. This decree of the council was provoked by the miraculous restoration of Lazarus to life, and did not pass unanimously, for neither Nicodemus nor Joseph of Arimathea could have consented to it: and there might be other members who would object to so iniquitous a measure. It was obtained through the influence of the High Priest, who in his official capacity avowed the maxim, that the end justifies the means, and declared that it was expedient that one person should die instead of the whole nation. He meant to speak of their temporal preservation as an independent state, and was so understood by the Council; but as the Holy Spirit had formerly inspired Balaam, so He now suggested to this wicked priest words which signified that Christ should die to save from eternal death, not Israelites alone, but His whole people, which He was to gather both from them and from the Gentiles. The rulers had determined not to put Him to death during the feast, for fear of a tumult; but it pleased Divine Providence, that both

the mode and time of that event should be contrary to their intention, and that He, the real Victim typified by the Paschal Lamb, should be sacrificed in the most public manner during the Passover, when Jerusalem was full of worshippers; and thus the fact of His death decreed by His own nation, and confirmed and effected by the Romans, would be made known throughout the world.

Jesus, I apprehend, proceeded direct from the house of Zacchæus to Bethany, to that of Simon, called the Lener, who had probably been cured by Him. There is a tradition, that he was the father of Lazarus and his sisters. An entertainment now provided for Jesus caused His enemies to alter their plan. The presence of Lazarus had brought a concourse of people from the city to see Jesus, and whatever augmented His popularity at this crisis alarmed the rulers. So unscrupulous were they, that they had not only given orders for the apprehension of Jesus, but even meditated removing out of their way the person whom He had restored to life. No one, however, from fear or regard offered to come forward. As the Pharisees said among themselves, *they prevailed nothing, the world is gone after Him*; but an incident that occurred at this feast provided them with the very instrument they wanted, and the increasing popularity of Jesus caused by this Miracle, satisfied them that delay would be dangerous. The sisters acted in conformity with their respective characters; for Martha assisted at table, and Mary, desirous of publicly showing her regard for Jesus, brought forth an alabaster vessel of genuine spikenard, a most fragrant and costly ointment, or rather balsam, and breaking it poured the liquor not only over His head, but also over His feet, thinking no expense that marked her admiration could be misplaced. Some of the disciples murmured at what they regarded as the waste of so precious an article; and Judas complained that it had not been sold, and the

produce given to the poor, not because he cared for them, but because he kept the common purse, and [ἐβάσταζεν] carried off what he pleased from it, for his own use. Three hundred denarii, nearly Ten pounds, the price which he stated it might have fetched, must have seemed a considerable sum to one who betrayed his Master and Friend for thirty shekels, that is, less than four Pounds, the amount of the legal fine paid to the owner of a slave who had been killed accidentally by a beast, (Exodus xxi. 32.) so literally did our Lord assume *the form of a servant*; and it is the precise value which Zechariah had predicted would be set by the people of Israel upon Him, who was not only their Sovereign but their God. *A goodly price that I was prized at of them*, said Jehovah, chap. xi. 13. Our Saviour's reply intimated that they did not duly appreciate Him. *The poor always ye have with you, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good, but me ye have not always*. In fact, His departure was at hand, and the act for which they had heedlessly blamed her, being all she could do to honour Him, was so acceptable and so excellent, that it would be mentioned to her praise wherever the good news of salvation should be proclaimed<sup>1</sup>. He added, that in so doing, she had anticipated His funeral, drawing by the remark their attention to His approaching death, and hinting that they would not have grudged the use of this costly spikenard, had they known that it was designed, as it were, for the embalment of a

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the opinion of Lightfoot, Whitby, Macknight, and Hales, I believe with Michaelis and Doddridge, and with other approved commentators, that this anointing, and that recorded by Matthew xxvi. and Mark xiv. are the same; conceiving it more probable that they should introduce it into another part of their Gospels, than that within the compass of four days Jesus should have been anointed by two women with the same costly ointment, and that the same value should be assigned, and the action be blamed and justified in the same words. I have here deviated from Newcome's arrangement to follow that of Doddridge.

friend. Judas in anger retired from the entertainment, and this reproof seems to have determined him to make his bargain with the chief priests and rulers.

111. *Jesus, riding on an Ass's colt, proceeds in triumph to the Temple, and weeps over Jerusalem.* Matt. xxi. 1—17. Mark xi. 1—19. Luke xix. 28—48. John xii. 12—50.

Our Lord now prepared to enter Jerusalem as its Sovereign, and to take, as it were, formal possession of the Temple, which as the King of Israel was His Palace; but as He was not of the tribe that ministered at the altar, He could not enter the Sanctuary, but like other worshippers, among whom were to be classed the ancient Kings, He did not proceed beyond the court in which it stood. He came not, however, at this first advent, to establish an earthly monarchy, but to offer Himself as a victim for the sins of mankind; and every action of the five days, from His entry to His apprehension, was in harmony with His humble yet sublime character of a spiritual Deliverer. Being about to be offered up, He declared more distinctly than He had done hitherto that He was the Messiah; but that the people might not again attempt to make Him by force their King, after teaching in the day, He cautiously retired from the city at night. This Monarch, lowly both in rank and character, and though *meek and lowly, yet just, and having salvation*, was to enter His capital, as Zechariah (ix. 9.) had foretold four centuries before, riding upon *an ass, even a colt the foal of an ass*. For this there was an especial reason, for not only horses and chariots would have been unsuitable to His pacific character and low condition, but the king of Israel had been expressly forbidden to multiply them *to himself, or to cause his people for this purpose to return to Egypt*, (Deut. xvii. 16.) because they

were to trust in God, in whom alone *is safety*, though a *horse is prepared against the day of battle*<sup>a</sup>. (Prov. xxi. 31.) Solomon, who had broken the Law by taking to himself wives from the forbidden nations, sinned also in this minor respect, whereas his father, whose heart was perfect with God, slew the many horses he had taken from the king of Zobah. (2 Sam. viii.) In the warmer climate of Palestine, the Ass, which is a finer animal than in England, has been used since the time of the Judges by persons of distinction, and excites none of the contempt with which it is associated in our minds; yet still the preference of it may be considered as a mark of humility, and as more agreeable to the office of a Teacher. Jesus stopped at His frequent place of resort, the mount of Olives, and sent forward two disciples to procure an ass and its colt, pointing out precisely where they were to be found, and how they should settle with the owners; for so poor was this King, that even these inferior animals must be borrowed for the occasion. When brought, He mounted the unbroken \* colt, upon which no one had hitherto sat, and rendered it steady and governable; for which reason the Ass also was brought. The accompanying crowds spread their cloaks and palm branches along the road, as was usual on a triumphal entry, greeting Him with hymns of hosannas, that is, wishes that God might preserve Him, as the Messiah, the Son of David, their long-expected Sovereign, and wishing Him prosperity and length of days, in the prophetic words of the 118th Psalm,

<sup>a</sup> Sherlock's Dissertations, iv. p. 271.

\* According to St. Matthew, it seems as if He rode by turns upon both animals, *ἐπανω αὐτῶν*; but this on so short a ride is improbable, and Beza refers the pronoun to the nearer antecedent *cloaks*, *ἱμαῖα*; others, who consider this construction as harsh, assume that the plural is employed for the singular, as in Joshua vii. 1. Matt. ii. 20. xxvii. 44. Luke xxiii. 36. and St. John xiv. 23; in which it is used of His only cloak, which was divided into four parts; a mode of expression which occurs in the works of profane writers, as in the Iliad, εἰ. 512. Ἐπε-βήσατο ἱππῶν.



saying, *Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.* He must have been attended by an immense crowd, for a multitude came with Him, and the *whole city was moved*, to meet and receive Him. It was the restoration of Lazarus to life that excited this transient popularity. The season of His apprehension was so nigh, that Jesus no longer declined their homage; and when the Pharisees called upon Him to silence the people, He assured them, that if these refused to own Him, some other method would be taken of declaring Him to be the King of Israel, as extraordinary as if the very stones were to cry out to proclaim His praise. As He approached Jerusalem, conscious though He was of the sufferings and death that there awaited Him, no personal feeling affected Him; but He wept over the infatuation of that cruel and ungrateful city, which had neglected the season of His gracious visitation, and foretold its siege and destruction. We have seen Jesus in tears at the grief of Mary for her brother's death; but as the original shows ἐδάκρυσεν there, and ἔκλαυσεν here, His sorrow was the most profound when He anticipated the doom of His country. The event corresponded most minutely with the prophecy; as Titus, to cut off all hope of safety by flight, encompassed it with a trench and mound, though a most laborious undertaking, for the circuit was almost five miles: and we learn from the Jewish historian, (vii. 18.) that the Romans so levelled the city when taken, *laying it even with the ground*, and not leaving *one stone upon another*, that they who had not seen it before would not have believed that it ever had been inhabited; so literally was it encircled and pressed in on every side. This *Desire of all nations*, Jehovah, *the Messenger of the Covenant*, as foretold by Malachi, (iii. 1.) now appeared suddenly in His house, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Haggai, (ii. 9.) that this Temple should be distinguished beyond that of Solomon,

since the frequent appearance of Him, Jehovah incarnate, in this building, was far more glorious than that of the Shekinah, the visible symbol of the Deity overshadowing the Mercy Seat, in that. Its subsequent destruction prevented its accomplishment by any other claimant of the office : hence the exclamation of a celebrated Rabbi, when referring to that event, Alas ! the time of the Messiah is past ! Here Christ cured all the lame and blind that came unto Him, so as to excite the admiration even of the children, who joined in the general acclamation of Hosannah to the Son of David. The chief priests and scribes reproved Him for accepting the homage of those whom they conceived to be incompetent to form a judgment ; but He showed them that it was they themselves who had drawn a false conclusion, by explaining of this conduct a passage in the eight Psalm, *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise*, intimating thereby, that this tribute of admiration was His due, and that it justly rebuked the silence of those, who, from age and knowledge, ought to have been the first to acknowledge Him.

Certain Greeks now applied to Philip to procure them an interview with Jesus ; and we know that many Gentiles, who believed in *the God of Israel*, offered sacrifice in this Temple, and attended His worship in the Synagogue ; but these as they came up to keep the feast, seem to have been proselytes ; still it might have been difficult on such an occasion even for proselytes to get access to Him. Their request was communicated by Philip to Andrew, and by the two to their Master. It is not said whether or not it was granted, nor are their motives mentioned ; yet from the following speech of our Lord, whether only reported to them, or spoken in their presence, (which I think most probable,) we may infer, that, like His disciples, they expected that He was about to establish a temporal kingdom. He

declared that the hour for His glorification is arrived, but He intimated that His way lay through death, from which they ought to have concluded that it must be of a spiritual nature. He might have continued to enjoy His original glory in Heaven, *rejoicing always before His Father*, (Proverbs viii. 30.) without condescending to take the Manhood into His Godhead, or might now resume it without suffering; but then the whole human race must perish, and the noblest of God's works, formed for an immortality of happiness, and for whom this earth had been fitted up as a suitable abode, that in which He might be praised and served, would have been created in vain. His philanthropy, therefore, *His delights in the sons of men*, (Prov. viii. 31.) made Him submit to death; that as the seed, germinating in the earth, brings forth an abundant increase, He by dying might give eternal life to His people. He added, *He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal*; calling upon those who would serve Him, to follow Him, and assuring them, in return, that they should be where He was, and be honoured by His Father. He thereby insinuated that these Greeks would be disappointed, if their wish had proceeded from any hope of earthly advantage. He confessed that the prospect was distressing, and that if He yielded to the emotions of nature He should pray to be saved from this hour, (for being a Man, He was tempted in all points like unto His brethren,) but He checked His aversion to suffering; He remembered that it was the very object for which He had come into the world; and as His death would glorify God by exhibiting to the admiration of the universe the union of infinite justice and mercy, which could thus alone be reconciled, He declared His entire acquiescence in His Father's will, *for this cause came I unto this hour*. The declaration was followed by the Father's own approving voice from heaven, saying, *I have both glorified*

*My Name, and I will glorify it again* ; referring to God's Name having been glorified just before Jesus entered into the Temple, among the hosannahs of the people. Christ was attested from heaven in His three offices; at His Baptism, when He entered on His Ministry, as the great High Priest; at His transfiguration, as the Prophet, whom all must hear; and now as King, when He had fulfilled the prophecy, *Rejoice, O Sion, behold thy King cometh*. This audible voice of God was generally accompanied, as in this instance, and in that of St. Paul's conversion, with thunder. Some who recollected from the Scriptures that their fathers were accustomed to receive communications from God, said, *an angel spake*: the people, who were not so well instructed, only thought that it thundered, and this may include the Greeks and other proselytes. He then intimated the nature of His Death, and its happy and glorious result in the Salvation both of Jew and Gentile. The figurative expression, *If I be lifted up*, was understood by His auditors to signify His death; but this they could not reconcile with their preconceived idea of the perpetual reign of the Messiah. He answered their question by another figure drawn from the Sun, by which He directs them to make use of the light of His instruction while they had the opportunity, that they might correct their erroneous notions.

He is now said to have concluded His teaching; yet another short discourse follows, separated from this only by an important remark of the Evangelist. (37—43.) Some commentators consider it as a part of the former, but as it does not appear to me likely that St. John would have interrupted it to insert his own words, I agree with those who take it as a repetition of the substance of what Jesus had spoken on former occasions. In summing up His doctrine the Evangelist declares, that Jesus had said that He had come a Light into the world, and that His words were so distinct and intel-

gible, that they would condemn those who rejected Him, though His object was not to condemn, but to save men. That no doubt may remain, Jesus concluded with saying, that His doctrine was not His own invention, but received from His Father; revealed without addition or diminution, and that He knew that eternal life depended upon the belief of it. The sum and substance, the beginning and end of His teaching, contained, according to Tittmann<sup>i</sup>, four primary articles, which cannot be denied by any who profess the name of Christ: the first, that He was God's Ambassador, sent for the salvation of mankind; secondly, that He was One with the Father, in respect not only of will but of works, and therefore in nature, in a word, the Son of God; thirdly, that He was the Saviour, who was to procure salvation for all, and to bestow eternal life on believers; and fourthly, that His doctrine was infallibly true. St. John interposes between these two discourses the observation, that even the many miracles of His Master had not induced the Jews to believe in Him. He reminds the reader that this result had been foretold, and in applying the prophecy he unequivocally asserts the Divinity of Jesus. His words are memorable, *Isaiah said this when he saw His glory, and spake of Him*. Now if we turn to the sixth chapter, from which he cites, we shall find that the Person, whose glory the Prophet saw, was the *Lord of Hosts*, Jehovah Sabaoth, that is, the everlasting Deity, Creator, and Governor of the world. May the Anti-Trinitarian meditate upon this apostolical interpretation of the Prophet, to adopt the language of a devotional author, and when he refuses to worship Jesus, consider what satisfactory explanation he can offer of the passage. "To me it appears as plain as words can make it, that Jesus is *the Lord of Hosts*; and I am well satisfied, that it will not be a burden to any at the hour of death, nor be laid to their charge at the day of judgment,

<sup>i</sup> On St. John's Gospel, vol. ii. p. 79.

that they have thought too highly of Him, or laboured too much in setting Him forth to others *as the Alpha and Omega, the true God, and eternal life*<sup>k</sup>." In the evening Jesus withdrew to Bethany, we may suppose to the family of Lazarus.

112. *Jesus condemns the barren fig-tree, and once more purifies the Temple. Mark xi. 12—19. Matt. xxii. 45—48.*

The next morning, coming into Jerusalem early, probably without having eaten, Jesus being hungry went up to a fig-tree which grew by the road. The fig season had not arrived, yet Jesus might reasonably expect to find fruit which is formed before the leaves, and as this tree had the latter, it might be said to promise the former. On approaching, however, He found the promise was deceitful. Condemning it therefore not for its barrenness, but its false show of fruitfulness, He said, *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever*, and it withered to the root. This, like many of His miracles, had a moral meaning; it was the Parable of the barren fig tree realized and exhibited to the senses. Chrysostom observes, that He wished to show that punishment should overtake the nation that rejected Him; and because His dispensation was that not of justice, but of mercy, He selected not a man but a tree. His mercy He prefigured by numberless Miracles of kindness; His judgments on the unfruitful, by a single sign inflicted on a senseless and useless plant. Like this fig-tree, the Jewish nation, professing zeal for the divine law, had at a distance a promising appearance; but upon a nearer view, it was found to be destitute of its fruits. Not profiting by the advantages of which it boasted, it would be condemned like that as

<sup>k</sup> Newton's Cardiphonia.

unproductive, and cumbering the ground, because it did not know and profit by the day of its Visitation. Awfully has the prediction been accomplished, in the dispersion and misery of God's once chosen people; yet *as mercy rejoiceth against judgment*, the parallel is not complete; for Israel, so long *a dry tree, shall be grafted again into its own stock*, and bring forth abundant fruit.

Jesus now again entered the Temple, and once more, at the close of His Ministry as at its commencement, turned out the buyers and sellers, but with a severer rebuke; for He then charged them with turning *into a house of merchandise* this sacred building, which was designed to be *a house of prayer*: He now said, *Ye have made it a den of robbers*. The contrast between its intended use, and their gross profanation of it, must have struck them the more, as it was not an original remark, but was the application of two passages from the Prophets Isaiah (lvi.) and Jeremiah. (vii. 11.) The reference to the latter was well suited to awaken these self-righteous formalists from their false security, for it was connected with a threat, that the Lord would do unto this house as He had done to Shiloh, where He set His Name at the first, in which their fathers had put their trust; and that He would cast them out of His sight, as He had already cast out the ten tribes. That sin might provoke Him to cast off His people, had been proved by His suffering the king of Babylon to carry them into captivity, and this reference intimated that there would be another fulfilment of the prophecy. The speech in which Josephus, (Wars, v. 9.) before that generation had passed away, endeavoured to persuade the inhabitants of Jerusalem to surrender, is the best commentary upon our Lord's declaration. "The temple itself is become the receptacle of all crimes, and this divine place is polluted by our own countrymen, while it is revered by the Romans. And, after all this, do you

expect Him, whom you have treated so impiously, to be your supporter?" Jesus continued the whole day in the Temple teaching in its courts, the scribes and other leading persons watching Him in order to destroy Him, but in vain, as the people listened to His instructions with astonishment and respect. At night He again retired from the city.

113, 114. *The Discourse of Jesus in the Temple with the Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the Elders. Matt. xxi. Mark xi. xii. Luke xx.*

The following day as they passed by, Peter drew the attention of Jesus to the withered fig-tree; and He availed Himself of it, to exhort them to a lively and intense faith, assuring them, that if they had no misgiving, they too should perform even greater miracles than this. He added, what is of perpetual application, that the prayer of faith will be answered: but that when we pray, if we would obtain pardon, we must first ourselves pardon those that have trespassed against us.

As Jesus now appeared openly as the Messiah, the leading persons demanded on what authority He acted, in having entered the Temple with such a train of attendants, and taken upon Him to regulate the conduct of those who frequented it; an office beyond the province of a private individual, and justifiable only in the Messiah as the representative of its Master. Instead of a reply which would have occasioned His immediate apprehension, He engaged to tell them, if they would first answer Him this question, Was the Baptism of John a divine or a human institution? This they could not answer in the affirmative, without acknowledging Jesus for the Messiah, for as such John had



announced Him; or in the negative, from prudence, for the people who believed that the Baptist was a prophet, would in indignation have stoned them. They therefore affected ignorance, and by this plea allowed their incompetence to judge of such topics. He then proceeded to warn them, affording them one more opportunity of repentance; but under the veil of parables, which, while it was too transparent to conceal His meaning, rendered it in a degree less offensive, and sheltered Him from the consequences which would have followed from a plain and open statement of the truth.

The first was that of two sons, whom their father desired to work in his vineyard, one of whom rudely refused to go but afterwards went, the other readily assented but stayed away. This intimated, that the profligate part of the nation would be brought to repentance and obedience, while those who had the form of godliness without the reality would reject the Gospel, notwithstanding their specious professions; and experience proves the remark to be generally true in all ages. By asking their opinion, Jesus made them condemn themselves, but it seems that they were not aware of this, till He made a direct application; *Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.* The second represented the nation at large under the image of a vineyard, familiar to them from its occurrence in the Old Testament, yet with special reference to their rulers and teachers, as husbandmen to whom it had been let. Their peculiar privileges as a Church were entrusted to them, that they might abound in good works; but when God was no longer present among them by external displays of power, as on the promulgation of the Law, they forgot that they were accountable to Him; the Prophets whom He sent from time to time to call them to repentance, they had ill treated, or killed

out of hatred to their Master; and they were now about to fill up the measure of their crimes by the murder of the Son Himself. Not immediately perceiving the application of the Parable, they answered, that these wretches would be put to a wretched death, and the means of grace be transferred to those who would make a proper use of them. And He confirmed their observation; and as Nathan said to David, *Thou art the man*, He added, *The kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*. But first to show that He did not speak from Himself, He asked if they had never read in the Scripture, *The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner*: a passage in the 118th Psalm, parts of which they had so lately heard applied to Him by the multitude. He warned them, that whoever should fall upon this stone, would suffer like one who stumbles and breaks his limbs, yet may recover; but he on whom the stone itself should fall, would by its weight be ground to powder; thereby contrasting the lesser punishment of him who only rejects Him, with the heavier that awaited those who crucified Him, and opposed His religion. They now discovered His meaning, but this only the more exasperated them. They were afraid of seizing Him, He therefore proceeded to exhibit their rejection of Him, their consequent ruin, and the transferring of their privileges to the Gentiles, in the Parable of a marriage-feast, given by a king in honour of his son. We have already read a similar one in St. Luke's Gospel, but in this we have an additional circumstance to show, that not only the original guests who stayed away, but that some also of those who were admitted in their stead, were unworthy. It is the custom in the East, and was so as early as the time of Joseph, (Gen. xlv. 22.) for kings and others of high rank to bestow robes upon those whom they delight to honour; we read of it in

modern books of travels, and the parable of the Prodigal son proves it to have prevailed in the time of our Lord<sup>1</sup>. A wedding garment, no doubt, was provided on this occasion for each guest; for it could not be reasonably expected, that travellers should be properly habited for an entertainment to which they were so unexpectedly invited. One person, however, satisfied with his own apparel, rejected the proffered robe, and remained unnoticed, till the King entered to inspect the company. His arrival flashed upon him a conviction of his unfitness, for being questioned how he came there, he was speechless, which he would not have been if he had had any excuse to offer. Calvin observes, that though God requires holiness in order to our receiving the benefits of the Gospel, He is graciously pleased to work it in us by His holy Spirit, and may consequently justly resent and punish our neglect of so great a favour. The unworthy guest was therefore excluded, and punished for not conforming to the rules of the banquet, by being thrown into a dark dungeon, where weeping and vexation were his portion. This shows that hypocrites will intrude among real believers, and remain till detected at the last day by the heart-searching God. In the Revelation (xix.) we read, that at the marriage of the Lamb, the Church was arrayed in fine linen, which is explained to mean personal righteousness; and this many, like Calvin, take to be the Wedding garment of this parable, and such it is assumed to be in the first Exhortation of our Communion Service. According to others, it denotes the imputed righteousness of the Saviour, which seems a better meaning, as the habit required was a gift from the Master of the feast. The Fathers give sometimes the one and sometimes the other interpretation; nor is this inconsistent, for

<sup>1</sup> This custom would lead the wealthy to keep stores of robes, and explains the representing the perishable nature of earthly treasure as being liable to injury from moths as well as from rust. Matt. vi. 19. James v. 3.

imputed and inherent righteousness, that is, Justification and Sanctification, are inseparable, and seem to differ only as cause and effect; and the Church or Congregation of believers is described by the Psalmist as possessing both under the figure of a bride, who is *all glorious within, with her clothing of wrought gold.* (xlv. 13.) The metaphor of a robe is applied to both in the New Testament. *Put off the old man, and put on the new;* (Eph. iv. 24.) *Put on the Lord Jesus;* (Rom. xiii. 14.) are the exhortations of Paul. *I counsel thee to buy of Me white raiment,* says our Lord Himself (Rev. iii. 18.) to the Church of Laodicea; and the robes of the saints, their righteousness, are declared in the Apocalypse to have been *made white* by being *washed in the blood of the Lamb.* (Rev. vii. 14.)

115. *The Pharisees and Herodians, the Sadducees, and a Scribe, put cases to Jesus for His decision, which He determines without committing Himself, and in return, by one question, silences the Pharisees. Matt. xxii. Mark xii. Luke xx.*

The chief priests, scribes, and elders, had come, by order of the senate, to examine the pretensions of Jesus; but their project of forcing Him to a declaration, which would have put Him in their power, issued in their own confusion. They attempted in vain to *entangle Him* by their questions, and the one He in return put to them, silenced them for ever. They differed widely among themselves, yet agreed in the wish to ensnare Him; and therefore having previously consulted together, came again in succession to put to Him controverted cases, which He could not decide either way without giving offence. First came the Pharisees and Herodians, who, feigning themselves

to be just and scrupulous, accosted Him with an hypocritical semblance of deference, asking, as a case of conscience, if they might pay the Roman tribute without a breach of the Law. The Pharisees inferred from the prohibition to make a stranger their sovereign, that any such payment was unlawful, and this was of course the popular opinion. The Herodians, or Herod's partisans, who made religion subservient to politics, maintained the contrary. Had Jesus directed them to pay the tribute, the former would have represented Him as opposing the Law, and advocating the cause of idolaters, and even renouncing the office of Messiah, who they expected would be their King, and deliver them from foreign servitude; had He declared it illegal, the latter would have charged Him with treason. The dilemma, affecting His reputation or even life, it seemed impossible to escape, and yet He extricated Himself from their toils, simply by taking advantage of their own concession, that the denarius bore the Emperor's *image and superscription*; and of their tradition, that the country in which a king's coin was current, was justly subject to his government. In the same short speech He taught those turbulent and seditious demagogues, the Pharisees, to render unto Cæsar Cæsar's dues, which they refused; and those licentious and irreligious courtiers, the Herodians, to render unto God those which were His, which they neglected; thus publicly, but obliquely, in a way that neither could take any hold of, reproving both, and conveying important moral instruction of universal application on the duties of men, to God and to the Government under which they live, leaving the nature of the latter as he found it.

The Sadducees, who disbelieved not only the Resurrection of the body, but the Immortality of the soul, next came to perplex Him with a common-place objection, derived from the obligation in the Law on a man to take the wife of a brother

that had died childless. When asked by the Pharisees respecting worldly matters, Christ, whose kingdom was not from this world, did not choose to interfere; but when the Sadducees moved a question concerning eternal life, He felt that it no longer became Him to be silent. He reproved their ignorance on a double account: *ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God*. First, He removed the ground of their objection, by declaring, that as in the next world men would be like the angels in immortality, they would not marry, as there would be no need of keeping up a number that would never diminish; secondly, He showed that the existence of the soul after death was implied in the Law<sup>m</sup>. Some think that He chose a text out of the Pentateuch, because it was the only portion of the Bible acknowledged by the Sadducees, but the truth of that opinion is doubtful; and it seems a better reason to assign, that He thought fit to answer them out of the very author from whom they brought their objection. Many passages from the Psalms and the Prophets might of course have been cited, in which the doctrines they rejected were more plainly revealed; but Jesus applied Himself to the clearing up of the sentiments of Moses on that article, and He effected it two ways; first, by observing that their quotation did not prove what they wished for; and, secondly, by showing, that what He had taught elsewhere, fully and clearly disproved it. As *maintaining a position*, He might perhaps have chosen a clearer text; but if we consider Him in the capacity of *respondent*, and as defeating a subtle and plausible objection, there could not have been a more effectual mode of doing it. Jehovah had announced Himself to Moses out of the burning bush, as the *God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; and He added, *This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations*. The last of these had then been dead near

<sup>m</sup> Waterland's Sermon on the text.

two thousand years, and still He continued to be *their* God. Is He then a God of lifeless clay, of dust and ashes? Surely this could be supposed by none: when God therefore declared Himself to be their God, they were still alive, and in a state of enjoyment; therefore the soul survives the body, for *God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

The Sadducees were silenced, the Scribes applauded, and the people assented to His reasoning; yet to many now, the answer does not seem to go directly to the proof of the Resurrection. They forget, that as the Sadducees denied the Immateriality of the Soul, with them the disbelief of the Resurrection was the disbelief of a Future State; and if Jesus proved no more than the soul's subsisting after death, He still proved enough for His purpose. But the same thread of argument with which He began, leads by just and necessary consequence to the Resurrection of the body. It implied, that their God will finally render them completely happy, and therefore it presumes the reality of the Resurrection; for as man was originally made a compound being, the body must not be regarded, as it was by philosophers, as a prison from which the soul longs to escape, or as a slave to be chastised, but as an essential part of our nature; and as Death was the punishment of sin, and as every one remaining under that sentence still carries about with him in his mortality the mark of Divine displeasure; the immortal spirit though in Paradise cannot be perfectly happy, till reunited with its original companion. That companion has received a taint from the fall of Adam; and too often tempts the soul which sojourns in it to sins of the flesh, while in return it is made an instrument to gratify the malignant passions. Still it has been ennobled by its union with our Lord and elder brother, who, now in complete human nature, of which He never will divest Himself, occupies at His Father's right hand a mediatorial throne; and in heaven the bodies of Christ's members,

though essentially the same, will undergo a greater change than we can now even imagine, since He will fashion them into the likeness of His own *glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue even all things unto Himself*. It will no more weigh down the spirit through its infirmity, it will no longer tempt it to sin, but it will become incorruptible and spiritual; not purified like that of Adam, as it came fresh from the hands of its Maker, but assimilated to that of Christ, which as the reward of his obedience has been glorified. Our popular literature more often embodies the speculations of heathen philosophy than the truths of holy writ, and therefore our authors, sometimes even those on religion, seem to forget, that the Resurrection of the body is as much an article of the Creed, as Life everlasting. This fundamental truth, the exclusive property of Revelation, was deemed so incredible, that, when Paul preached it at Athens, it exposed him to scorn and ridicule; the latter, though properly believed by few, was no new proposition in the city of Socrates and Plato. It was, however, incumbered and injured by its connection with another doctrine, which we know from Revelation to be false, the Pre-existence of the soul. The heathen philosophers, who allowed that the Deity had brought the Universe into form and shape, could not conceive how any part of it could have been created out of nothing. Matter therefore was with them eternal, and spiritual beings, such as the Soul, were not the Creatures of God, but Emanations from Him, consequently portions of His Essence. The Soul accordingly must in itself be pure; but as the existence of sin is undeniable, its source must be found in the Body. The perplexity which the existence of evil occasioned to thinking minds, unenlightened from above, originated the belief of the inherent imperfection of Matter; and this was a prolific source of error, both in Doctrine and Practice. Hence proceeded the notion, that the Union of



body and soul was a misfortune, and the Punishment of some offence committed in a pre-existent state. The Soul was supposed to be degraded by its confinement in a material dungeon, which cramped its faculties and impaired its purity ; it was taught to long to break the chain which prevented it from soaring to its native skies ; and as the Body was enfeebled by disease or age, it was supposed to improve, in proportion, both in intelligence and in purity. This Pagan fancy is so interwoven into our language and thoughts, that an irrational importance has been attached to dying words, “ novissima verba ;” and Christians have often expressed in prose the sentiment of the Poet Waller,

The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,  
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made.

It followed from this theory, that the Body was not only to be brought into subjection by abstinence and penance, but to be debarred even of its legitimate gratifications ; and to those whose lives were passed in its mortification, and who looked forward with hope to an ultimate emancipation from it, the doctrine, that this companion of the soul, to which they fondly ascribed their sinful propensities, would be raised from the grave, and put on immortality, was at once absurd and revolting. Such persons could never be brought to believe, that the Deity had originally created Matter, or that the Son of God had more than an apparent Body. Hence they denied both the Incarnation and Crucifixion, and, like some of the Corinthians, believed that the Resurrection was past already, being no more than a figurative rising out of sin into newness of life. Yet it is upon the fact of our Saviour's rising in a human body, that our hope of immortality rests ; the philosophical doctrine is only a pleasing dream : the earliest scriptural declaration is that of Job, that *in his flesh* he shall see his Redeemer : and the custom among

savage nations of slaying the attendants and horses of a dead chief, and the Egyptian practice of embalming, seem to indicate, that before the introduction of Philosophy, Tradition had handed down the hope of Immortality, as connected with the restoration to life of the Body.

There have been Christians, and among them writers of eminence, who maintain, that even the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul was at least generally unknown to the Israelites under the Mosaic dispensation; and that this most powerful motive to obedience, and only genuine source of consolation, while suffered to transpire among heathens, was studiously concealed from the chosen people of God. It is amazing, that any one, recollecting this answer to the Sadducees, could have started such a paradox; but no diligent and humble reader of the Bible will be disposed to give it credit. He knows from inspired authority, (Heb. xi.) that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who *sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country* (γῆν), waited in faith for a better country of their own (πατρίδα), *wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God*; and that Moses, when he might have enjoyed *the pleasures of sin*, as the adopted son of the Egyptian princess, despised all that rank and power could ensure him, because he *had respect unto the recompense of an eternal reward*. He readily allows, that, for wise and obvious reasons, the Legislator did not, and indeed could not, make eternal life the sanction of his *National Laws*, yet he cannot think that he would withhold from his people the knowledge of a doctrine which we know was his own support and principle of action. (Heb. xi. 24—26.) With the Apostle (2 Tim. i. 10.) we should gratefully acknowledge, that it is Jesus Christ, who through the Gospel has brought to us a clear and distinct view of life and immortality, which before Him had not been so distinctly revealed; but we also believe with our Church, (Art. vii.) “that both in the Old and New

Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ; and that they are not to be heard which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises."

A lawyer, who was a Pharisee, next came forward to try Jesus by enquiring which was *the first commandment of all*. This was a question at that time much debated among their doctors. The Sabbath, the Rules concerning Meats, those regarding Purification, and those which directed Sacrifices, had their respective eager advocates. Jesus disappointed all by quoting the emphatic words of Moses, *Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: and adding, This is the first commandment: and the second is like, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* The love of God thus defined is not a mere contemplative feeling, but an active, energetic principle, which will constrain him who is really influenced by it to render a ready and cheerful obedience to whatever God has commanded, because He has commanded it. No Jew, therefore, could be reasonably displeased with an answer which was actually taken from their Law, and a sincere love of God would be the best security for keeping the rules respecting the Sabbath, Purification, Sacrifice, or whatever else He had enjoined. *On these two commandments,* Jesus continued, *hang all the Law and the Prophets.* Fear may prevent many infractions of the Law, but Love alone will ensure a constant obedience; and he who loves God will necessarily love his neighbour, and that will secure the due performance of both positive and negative precepts; for, as St. Paul argues in his Epistle to the Romans, (xiii. 8—10.) every *commandment is briefly comprehended in this saying: therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* The discrimination in the degree of love required with respect to God and man, deserves our most serious attention. Self-love is to be the measure of

our love of our neighbour, but no measure is assigned to our love of God, whom we are required to make the supreme and primary object of our affections. Nor will this be deemed a strained interpretation by any who considers, that in our Lord's form of prayer we are taught to put up three petitions for the advancement of our Father's glory, before we ask for our daily bread. No terms indeed can be stronger, nor can *heart* and *soul* mean less than all the faculties of the understanding, and all the affections. Nor is this all; it is added, *with all thy strength*, which is generally understood to mean, with all thy energy, or in the highest possible degree, but the original is—with all that is thine—and this, both in the Syriac version and the Chaldee paraphrase, is rendered, with all that thou hast, that is, with all thy property. And this on reflection will appear to be the true meaning, as the other is tautological, since all our strength is included in all the heart and all the soul. The Scribe, struck with admiration, candidly acknowledged that He had answered well, and that to keep these commandments as Jesus had stated them, was better than all *burnt offerings and sacrifices*, indeed than the whole Mosaic ritual, which this cardinal precept could alone enable a man to fulfil. He in return assured the Scribe, that he was *not far from the kingdom of God*. We must suppose, therefore, that either he came originally as a sincere enquirer, or was by our Lord's speech brought to a right frame of mind. We have already had the testimony of Jesus to these commandments, in His conversation with another lawyer, whom He taught the comprehensive nature of the second, by the tale of the good Samaritan.

And now, having baffled their devices, Christ in His turn, to try their knowledge of the Law, put to them a question—Whose Son they conceived the Messiah to be? They answered, without hesitation or suspicion of His drift, *The son of David*. This He followed up by a second—How

David, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, could then acknowledge Him for a superior, which he did by calling Him his Lord? Had this son been a mere man, with what propriety could he bestow this title on a remote descendant, so inferior in all outward circumstances, to whom he could owe no obedience, and who would have no existence till a thousand years after his death? This they were unable to answer; nor will any have better success who deny the divinity of David's Son and Lord, of Him, who is at once *the root and the offspring* of His progenitor, the descendant of that king of Israel according to the flesh, but whose goings forth *have been of old, from everlasting*. (Micah v. 2.) The orthodox scheme alone can solve this seeming paradox. With this question Jesus finally silenced His insidious enemies, whose ingenuity, though not their malice, was exhausted. He thus effected one great object of His public teaching, the exposure of them to the multitude, who *heard Him gladly*; and to those who had *ears to hear*, He had afforded matter for meditation on the real character of the Messiah, and on His own title to the office.

116. *Jesus sharply reproves the Scribes and Pharisees, and finally leaves the Temple. Matt. xxiii.*

Jesus then turned to the multitude, and cautioned them to observe the instructions of the Scribes and Pharisees as authorised teachers, but not to imitate their conduct, as they contrived by plausible pretences to evade the performance of the duties they enjoined. He also warned them against their love of applause, and pursuit of worldly honours and distinctions, and, being no longer under restraint from fear of their seizing Him before His time, He exposed, without reserve, the hypocrisy of these blind guides, and the pernicious casuistry with which they explained away the moral law, and endeavoured to compensate for the omission of their

highest duties, as justice, charity, and fidelity, by a scrupulous performance of the minutest external injunctions, such as the tithing of garden herbs. *Blind guides* He called them, applying to them what seems to have been a proverbial expression, *Ye strain out<sup>2</sup> a gnat*; lest in drinking they should unaware pollute their draught by its containing a minute fly, while without scruple they swallowed a camel, the largest animal known in Judæa. So vigilant were they in the observance of the minutiae of the Law, while *they omitted the weightier matters*. While He condemned their dispensing with oaths, He confuted their sophistry by declaring, as in the Sermon on the Mount, that every oath, the matter of which is lawful, is obligatory, because when men swear by the creature, if their oath has any meaning, it is an appeal to the Creator. He reproached them with hypocritically condemning their forefathers, who had killed the ancient prophets, by repairing their tombs, while by their intended persecution of Himself and His disciples, they showed that they resembled them in character, and called upon them to fill up the measure of their national guilt by destroying Him. His language intimated that there is a certain measure to which a nation's iniquity is allowed to rise, and that before punishment is inflicted, it must be filled up by succeeding generations adding their own crimes to those of preceding ones. He at the same time declared, that their ruin was brought upon them by themselves, for He had sent unto them from time to time prophets and instructors, and had ever been ready to protect them as the parent bird gathers her brood under her wings, and His language implied that He was their God. He ended with a solemn assurance, that their house, that is the Temple, would be deserted, that they should be cast out of their Church, and excluded from the

<sup>2</sup> Διῶλίζοντες is thus correctly rendered in the Rheims Testament. *Strain at*, for which it is difficult to find a meaning, but to which use has reconciled us, is a typographical error of the first edition of the authorized version.

privileges of His people, and should see Him no more till they adopted the language which they now condemned in the people, and welcomed Him as the Messiah, blessing Him that came in the name of the Lord. With this prediction of their rejection and dispersion, and of their future conversion, He closed His Ministry, and for ever quitted the Temple.

This is by far the most animated of all our Lord's discourses, and the most likely to give offence. It could not fail of astonishing the people, who looked up to their teachers with reverence. And even those against whom it was levelled were confounded: they knew not what course to take, and so let Him go quietly away, without attempting to lay hands upon Him, as they had sometimes done before upon much less provocation.

117. *Jesus prefers the widow's Mite, because her all, to the large sums given out of their superfluity by the rich.*  
*Mark xii. 41—44. Luke xx. 1—4.*

However, previously to His departure, Jesus noticed the persons who were putting money into the chest, placed in the court in which He had been speaking, for the reception of voluntary contributions towards the expenses of the Temple, and bore His testimony to the charity of a Widow, who threw in two Mites, a sum less than our farthing, the smallest that was allowed to be given, and all that she possessed. This our Teacher pronounced to be a greater gift than the large donations of the rich, who only gave out of their superfluity, whereas she had retained nothing to purchase necessary food, for which she must depend upon her own labour, or precarious charity. The incident conveys an useful lesson both to the poor and rich; it encourages the poor to do what they can, because God, who looks into the heart, values the gift according to the disposition of the giver; and it im-

presses upon the rich a lesson, that has been taught even by heathen moralists, that it is not enough that their alms be large, for not the amount, but its proportion to their means, is the measure of their liberality. It is to be feared, however, that even the most liberal assign what He will not consider as a due proportion. Respect for Him who commended the widow, prevents any from condemning her bounty; but bounty far inferior to hers has been censured by the rich as improvident; and the poor are too apt to forget, that the fact is recorded for their imitation, I do not say literally, but in the spirit. The duty has never been more powerfully enforced than by St. Paul, who urges it as a motive for diligence in our calling. *Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* (Eph. iv. 28.)

118. *Jesus, on leaving the Temple, foretels its destruction, and afterwards on the mount of Olives declares to four of His Apostles the signs that shall precede His second coming. Matt. xxiv. xxv. Mark xiii. Luke xxi.*

The disciples, as they were departing, endeavoured to draw their Master's attention to the magnificence of the Temple, meaning thereby to intimate their regret as well as wonder at its predicted destruction; Jesus simply replied, that the time was coming when there should not be left *one stone upon another that should not be cast down*. No event could at the time appear less probable, for the Romans had as yet no motive to injure one of their own provinces; and when Jerusalem was taken after a siege of nearly five months, Titus, on entering, and looking up at the fortifications which the Jews had abandoned, exclaimed, Surely we have had God for our assistant, for what could human hands or machines do against these towers! He was anxious to save



the Temple, out of regard to its sanctity, or the wish of preserving such a distinguished ornament of the Empire ; but the pertinacity of the infatuated people, and the fury of his own soldiers, were the means through which the Almighty defeated his purpose. The Jews themselves first set fire to *God's holy and beautiful house*, and then the Romans ; and the General's endeavours to extinguish the flames were unavailing : yet he was able in part, by personal exertion, to save the golden Candlestick, the Shew-Bread Table, and other sacred furniture, which adorned his and his father's Triumph, and which we at this distant day may see sculptured on the still remaining Memorial of the fall of Judah—his Arch in the Roman Forum. The very foundations of Jerusalem were afterwards dug up in search of buried treasure ; and the words of Micah (iii. 12.) were literally fulfilled, *Therefore for your sake shall Zion be ploughed up as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps*. Our Lord's prophecy also was most exactly verified about forty years after it was uttered ; and it is not a simple prediction of the fact, but consists of a variety of particulars, such as the city being surrounded with a trench, the unparalleled misery of the besieged, and the complete destruction both of Town and Temple, which could never have been predicted in all its particulars, except by a true Prophet, and the literal fulfilment of which would never have been known, unless it had pleased Providence to preserve to us the best commentary upon it, in the minute detail of the siege, by Josephus, who was in the Roman camp, never embraced Christianity, and might not have heard of the prediction. He had the best opportunity of acquiring information, and his notorious flattery of the Romans would prevent his exaggerating their cruelty.

When they had withdrawn to the Mount of Olives, where they were alone, His three confidential disciples and Andrew asked when these things should be, and what should be the sign of His coming, and of the end of the age which was to

follow. Great, says Dr. Hales, has been the embarrassment and perplexity of commentators concerning the meaning of this enquiry; and four hypotheses are still afloat on the subject. The first confines the whole enquiry to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem; the second connects with it Christ's second advent in the Regeneration, according to Jewish expectation; the third substitutes for this advent His last, accompanied with the general judgment; and the fourth, which unites all the preceding in the answer to the three questions, Hales himself supports. Certainly several of the phrases are, according to our ideas, more suitable to the final and more important coming of the Son of Man at the last day, to judge the whole human race, than His coming through the agents of His Providence, the Roman Legions, to take vengeance on His apostate people, and to terminate the Jewish dispensation. Still our Lord's positive declaration, that the existing generation should not pass away till all these things were fulfilled, necessarily limits such expressions as the darkening of the sun and moon—the falling of the stars—and the shaking of the powers of heaven—and even the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds with great glory—to the destruction of Jerusalem; nor is the use of these figures to denote a temporal calamity, so harsh and bold as it may appear to persons not so familiar as the disciples were with the language of ancient prophecy<sup>a</sup>. Bishop Porteus maintains, that the whole twenty-fourth chapter in its primary

<sup>a</sup> Isaiah describes the future fall of Babylon in the same imagery, (chap. xiii. 9, 10, 13.) *Behold, the day of the Lord cometh—for the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine;—therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place: and chap. xxiv. 23. xxxiv. 4. Joel says, (ii. 31.) that the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.* Coming in the clouds sometimes means not the personal appearance of the Deity, but His manifestation, by some signal act of Providence. *Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt.* Isaiah xix. 1. 2 Sam. xxii. 10.

acceptation relates to the destruction of Jerusalem, but that the images are for the most part applicable also to the day of judgment, and that an allusion to that great event, as a kind of secondary object, runs through almost the whole prophecy. In Isaiah, he observes, there are no less than three subjects, the restoration of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, the call of the Gentiles to the Christian covenant, and the redemption by the Messiah, so intimately blended together, that it is extremely difficult to separate them; and in the same manner our Saviour seems to hold out the destruction of Jerusalem, His principal subject, as a type of the dissolution of the world, which is the under-part of the representation. By thus judiciously mingling together these two important catastrophes, He gives at the same time, according to the Bishop, a most interesting admonition to His hearers, and a most awful lesson to His future disciples; and thus the benefit of His predictions, instead of being confined to a few believers of His own age, is extended to every subsequent period of time. It is certain that the Jews, and even the early Christians, believed that the destruction of Jerusalem and the general judgment, if not contemporaneous, would only be separated by a very small interval, and this idea led the Apostles to put the questions together. But I conceive, that the two events are kept distinct, and that our Lord, after answering the first, avails Himself of it to prepare them for His final judgment; the first was to happen within the lifetime of some of that generation, but *of that [later] day knoweth no man*; (34—36.) and that this transition, about which commentators are so much divided, commences, as Doddridge maintains, with the exhortation to watch, as they know not at what hour their Lord cometh, *Therefore be ye also ready*. (Matt. xxiv. 42—44.) The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem was of peculiar importance to believers of that generation, since their own preservation from death, and

the miseries of a protracted siege, depended upon their observing the signs of the times, and acting on the Saviour's advice, to escape with the least possible delay. Others place it at the declaration, that *of that day knoweth no one but the Father*; but though this be true of both, the context, *one shall be taken and another left*, seems to fix it to the earthly judgment. It is therefore recorded by the first three Evangelists; and attention to Daniel's corresponding prediction is called for by two of them, *Whoso readeth, let him understand*; while His prediction is by Luke thus plainly interpreted, *When ye see Jerusalem compassed by armies*. As John wrote after the event, he has no allusion to it. By the special providence of God, when the Romans first advanced against Jerusalem under Cestius Gallus, though they had even burnt a part of the city, they suddenly withdrew under an unaccountable panic. At this Josephus expresses his surprise, as the place might have been taken immediately; and adds, the wickedness of the people suffered not the war to terminate, and certainly their successful pursuit of the enemy mainly contributed to their own ruin, since it both exasperated the Romans, and buoyed them up with a false confidence. But there was a purpose to be answered by his irresolution, unknown to the Jewish historian; for the Christians, mindful of their Lord's admonition, withdrew to Pella, and other places beyond the Jordan; so, as ecclesiastical history informs us, not one of them perished in the siege. Josephus also states, that many distinguished Jews then left the city, as it were a sinking ship.

Our Lord began with naming the Signs<sup>b</sup> that should pre-

<sup>b</sup> These signs were all fulfilled before the siege of Jerusalem. 1. Josephus gives us the history of Theudas, Ant. xx. 4. A.D. 48; and of an Egyptian, A.D. 58; Ant. xx. 7. for whom St. Paul was mistaken, Acts xxi. 38. The second is supplied by the local war between Herod the Tetrarch and his father-in-law, and the contest for the Empire on the death of Nero, the last of Cæsar's family. And rumours of a Parthian invasion were so prevalent, that the

cede His coming to take vengeance upon Jerusalem, and which we know from history were all minutely fulfilled: 1. False Messiahs, who deluded many to their destruction; 2. *Wars, Rumours of wars*; 3. Famine; 4. Pestilences; and 5. Earthquakes, are successively enumerated; but these were only (*ἀρχαὶ ὠδίνων*) like the pangs of a woman in labour before her time is come, the preludes of national distress. He then passed on to the calamities that awaited themselves, Persecution, the Treachery of some of their own body, and the abounding of false Teachers, the effect of which would be to cool the love of Christians both to Christ and to one another; and he added, that notwithstanding opposition and apostasy, the Gospel would be first proclaimed throughout the world. The signal for their flight was to be the appearance of the Roman Eagles within sight of the holy City, *the desolating Abomination*, as they are called by Daniel with the strictest propriety; for these standards, being objects of worship, were in Hebrew phraseology abominations; and none could be more desolating, for the Roman armies plundered and devastated without mercy, and, to use the indignant expression which one of their own historians puts into the mouth of a hostile chieftain<sup>c</sup>, “where they have made a desert they call it peace.” This was fulfilled to the letter; for the Romans, on the capture of the town, brought the Eagles

Governors of the Eastern Provinces made preparations to meet it. 3. The Famine throughout the land, foretold by Agabus, Acts xxi. lasted from A.D. 44, to A.D. 50. Josephus, Ant. xx. 4. 4. Tacitus records a Pestilence at Rome, A.D. 65, subsequent to St. Paul's martyrdom, in which, according to Suetonius, 30,000 persons perished. 5. Tacitus is also our authority for earthquakes, the most remarkable of which was severely felt in Asia Minor, where it nearly destroyed Colosse, Hierapolis, and Laodicea. He and Josephus agree in enumerating signs in the heavens resembling, it should seem, comets and the Aurora Borealis, which, according to the latter, people interpreted as they liked, or set at nought, till they were convicted of infatuation by the capture of their country, and the destruction of themselves.

<sup>c</sup> Speech of Galgacus in Tacitus's *Life of Agricola*, 30.

into the temple, and sacrificed to them. Before, the governors used to respect their scruples, and when they came up to Jerusalem, left them behind at Cæsarea<sup>d</sup>. Our Lord proceeded to inform them, that there never had been, and never should be again, so great Tribulation. He Himself had shed tears upon the foresight of these scenes of horror; and the reader of Josephus, who will find in that historian a similar remark, will allow that it is fully borne out by the event. Eleven hundred thousand persons are computed by him to have perished in the siege; and as it commenced at the Passover, a nation may be said to have been shut up within the walls; so that even allowing his numbers to be overstated, and considering how many must have died during the war, the expression is amply justified, that unless a limited season had been assigned, *no flesh should have been saved*, that is, the whole nation would have been exterminated; but those days were shortened as here promised, *for the sake of the elect*, or of those Jews that should hereafter be converted. St. Luke, who wrote more especially for Gentiles, adds the interesting fact, that Jerusalem should remain trodden down, that is, profanely occupied, by an unbelieving nation, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled; that is, it is understood by most, till the completion of the period of 1260 years, announced by Daniel and St. John, which is to usher in the universal prevalence of pure Christianity. This

<sup>d</sup> How strange and offensive a spectacle the approach of this *Abomination* must have been to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, will appear from the following incident: Pilate was the first governor that introduced them into the city; and he did it privately, the army making their entry in the night time. But as soon as the people knew it, they went in a vast body to Cæsarea, making earnest supplications that the images might be removed. He surrounded them with his guards, and threatened them with immediate death if they did not return home; but they threw themselves on the ground, and offered their necks to the sword, saying, they could more easily die than act contrary to their laws. Upon which Pilate, surprised at their firmness, immediately complied with their request. Josephus, Ant. xviii. 4.

also has been accomplished: the town, with the exception of part of the wall, and three towers which were kept for a garrison, was demolished, and when restored by the Emperor Ælius Hadrian, with the name of Ælia in honour of Himself, no Jew was permitted even to enter it. The Apostate Julian commanded in vain that the temple should be rebuilt; it is now the site of two mosques; and since the fall of the eastern empire, Jerusalem, except during eighty years after the first Crusade, has been under the government of Mahomedans.

Jesus then, from the fate of the antediluvians and of the Jews, exhorted them not to be taken by surprise, but to watch, and be ready for their Lord's more important coming as Judge of all men; and the ensuing Parable of the faithful Steward, which, though a warning to all believers, is more especially addressed to the ministers of religion, has clearly no reference to the fall of Jerusalem, as there was no reward to be bestowed after that event. That subject, therefore, is now altogether dismissed; and the transition to the final judgment begins; but as it is not designed that the day or hour should be known, He only informs them that His coming will be sudden and unexpected, and enjoins them, both by parables and in express words, to watch, and be ready in the discharge of their duties, that they may be able to *stand before the Son of Man*. Peter, fervid in his disposition, and full of affection to Jesus, broke out into this question, *Sayest Thou these words unto us*, that is, dost Thou exhort only us Thy Apostles to vigilance, or does the caution concern all Thy followers? The answer shows that it was designed for every generation, *What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch*. And certainly it concerns us as much as the believers of past ages, and equally whether we shall be found by Him alive at His second advent on earth, or go unto Him by death.

The same lesson is presented in another form in the

parable of the prudent and foolish Virgins. Even the former had fallen asleep, for the best have sins of infirmity and omission; but when aroused by the midnight cry, they had only to trim their lamps, for their oil or stock of grace, though not in use as it ought to have been, was not exhausted. The foolish ones had, when it was wanted, no oil, that is, no fruits of faith, consequently no genuine faith; they discovered their deficiency, but too late; and while they went, according to the advice of their wiser associates, in search of oil, the others had entered with the bridegroom, the palace door was fastened, and they were shut out for ever. We learn from the answer of the prudent ones, that the best of Christians have no superfluous works of merit, the benefits of which can be made over to others\*.

Sudden unexpected arrival after long delay is implied in both parables, and still more plainly in that of the Talents, which a Master delivered to his servants to trade with, in which it is positively stated, that he had travelled into a far country, and did not return to reckon with them till after a long time. St. Luke records instead of this a parable of Pounds, the moral of which is the same; but to save the justice of the owner it is stated in each, that the pounds and talents were intrusted to every man, according to His ability. *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord*, is equivalent to, Sit down at the banquet prepared in honour of my return, which may be considered as in itself an act of emancipation. The virgins were waiting, these servants were working for their Lord.

\* “ Voluntary works besides over and above God's commandments, which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety; for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for His sake than of bounden duty is required.” XIVth Article of our Church.



119. *Description of the day of Judgment. Matt. xxv. 31—46.*

Our Lord, having made this gradual transition from the destruction of the Jewish city and polity to His personal coming to judgment on His people, proceeded to describe, with the authority of a Judge, the awful day of final distribution, when the good and bad of all nations, summoned to *His glorious throne* to give an *account of the things done in the body*, are described under the figure of sheep and goats, placed on His right hand and His left. One quality only is selected to determine their acceptance or rejection, Love, as shown in active Benevolence to Christ in the Poor. This sentence of St. Jérôme, “*Christo in Pauperibus*,” is inscribed over the Hospital at Berne; and it ought to be familiar to members of our own communion, as the Author of the instructive Homily against Perils of Idolatry and superfluous decking of Churches, closes the third part with an exhortation, instead of wasting our substance upon dead stocks and stones, “to bestow it according to God’s word mercifully upon poor men and women, faithless children, widows, sick persons, *strangers*, prisoners, and such others as be in any necessity.” The former are invited into everlasting happiness, the latter are sent into everlasting misery; but there is a remarkable variation in the language; *the kingdom* is said to be *prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world*; but Hell, though it will be the inhabitation of the unmerciful, who are here called, *ye cursed*, is said to have been prepared, not for them, but *for the Devil and his angels*. “It is important to remark, that the selfishness which will place men at the left hand of the Judge is not positive but negative; they are punished not for oppressing, but merely for neglecting the poor. Had not the Judge Himself described it, we might have supposed that this fearful position would be occupied only by the

outcasts of humanity, monsters of rapacity, avarice, and injustice. But no. The fig-tree was withered not for bearing bad fruit, but yielding no fruit. The foolish virgins were excluded from the marriage feast not for casting away their lamps, but not using them. The unprofitable servant was cast into outer darkness not for wasting the talent committed to him, but for not employing it. The worldling, whom our Lord denominated a fool, is not charged with any positive sins; for aught that appears he had been honest and industrious; his diligence had been crowned with success, and he proposed to enjoy that success in retirement and ease—and what is this but an every-day history? But he had laid up treasure for himself, and was not rich towards God. And they who do not now learn the moral of his history—to take heed and beware of covetousness—are here represented as finally sharing his doom. They may have been free from all the grosser vices, they may have had many negative virtues, and have boasted that they did no harm. But the ground of their condemnation will be that they did no good. They were not extortioners, oppressors, cruel, they were only not kind. The condemnation of such includes of course all actual transgressors<sup>g</sup>. We must not, however, hence hastily conclude, that charity will purchase, as it were, heaven, and make amends for sin and the omission of other duties, but must take it as described by the Apostle, as not only relieving the distressed, but as abstaining against whatever may injure our neighbour, and so being *the fulfilling of the Law*. I observed in previous editions, that one distinguishing and conspicuous virtue is brought forward to illustrate the Christian character, which cannot exist alone, and which springs from a saving *faith* in the Redeemer, *working by love*; for we must observe, that the quality selected is not general, but Christian benevolence; love to the

<sup>g</sup> Harris's *Mammon*, p. 186.

brethren, for the sake of their common Master, *Inasmuch as you did it* (not merely to your fellow creatures out of pity, but) *to the least of these my brethren*, for my sake, *you did it unto me*. We here perceive the Judge not only noticing the works of His people when they make no mention of them, but when He is pleased to recount them with satisfaction, they seem to have forgotten that they ever performed them; and clearly do not build upon them their hope of salvation. But the self-righteous, we learn from His words in another place, will plead their merits and usefulness: *Lord, have we not prophesied* (that is, taught) *in Thy Name, and in Thy Name done many miracles?* I wish now to add, that this was written upon the ordinary supposition that the words were spoken to *Christians*: but I think on maturer consideration, that these nations, <sup>ἔθνη</sup> *ἔθνη*, were still *heathen*, and that the case of Christians had been considered under the preceding Parables. Upon this view the difficulty arising from the omission of faith as a condition of acceptance is altogether removed, and the heathen are judged according to the natural Law, and the precept most legibly *written on their hearts*; and a transition is made from the Jew to the Christian, and finally here to the heathen.

120. *Jesus foretels that He shall be delivered up to be crucified. Matt. xxvi. 1—6.*

Jesus then informed His disciples, that at the ensuing Passover He should be delivered up in order to be crucified, for He had all along a foreknowledge of His sufferings, peculiar to Himself. Futurity was concealed even from His most favoured servants and martyrs, as appears from the words of St. Paul, *I go up to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there*; (Acts xx. 22.) but Jesus had ever before His eyes the ignominious and painful death which was

to close His ministry, and this knowledge, while it vindicates Him from the imputation of being an impostor, and exalts His character as a man, is also evidence to His Divine nature. At the same time He ever looked forward with calm confidence to its object and consequences. His allusions to it were often connected with the glory that was to follow, and show the workings of a mind thoroughly conscious of being appointed to accomplish infinite good through great personal calamity. His voluntary relinquishment of earthly power, which Mahomet sought and obtained, and His declaration that an ignominious death was a necessary preliminary to His success, which, though designed to be universal, would be slow and distant, are inexplicable upon any other theory than the orthodox faith. We are all ready to admit, that *to Him bear all the Prophets witness*; but we are apt to forget, that in the variety and clearness of His own predictions, He excels them all. He foretels not only the fall of Jerusalem, but what shall happen to Himself and His followers, and the ultimate triumph of the Truth, notwithstanding His rejection by His own nation, and is Himself alike the Subject and Author of Prophecy.

## PART VI.

121. *The Disciples prepare the Passover. Matt. xxvi. 17.*

*Mark xiv. 13—16. Luke xxii. 7, 8.*

THE resort of strangers to Jerusalem at the national festivals, may be fairly supposed to have at least doubled for a time the number of inhabitants; for Cestius Gallus, Governor of Syria, being curious to ascertain how many persons were present at the Passover which he attended, A.D. 65, the number of lambs was reckoned, which, allowing one for ten persons, gave a temporary population of 2,556,000. This like the other enumerations of Josephus is suspicious; yet the Pilgrimages to Mecca show, that religion can bring together to one spot an enormous multitude even from more distant regions. It was customary for householders to allow these strangers the gratuitous use of rooms on such occasions<sup>a</sup>. From the Mount of Olives Jesus now returned for the last time to Bethany. The next morning was probably devoted to solitary meditation and prayer, for He does not seem to have visited Jerusalem at an early hour. He then directed Peter and John not at once to the house which He wished to use, but to a place where they would meet a servant of the owner, who, we presume, was one of His followers. It is supposed that this circuitous manner was chosen that His enemies might be ignorant of the spot, and so He might

<sup>a</sup> Κατάλυμα, here translated *Guest-chamber*, is the same word that is rendered *Inn* in the account of the Nativity, and is there supposed to answer to the modern term *Caravansary*, meaning a place provided for travellers, without any charge for the use of the apartments.

institute the Commemoration of His death without interruption. This supper is perplexed with critical difficulties. The curious on the subject will find an accurate statement of the different opinions in an elaborate note in Townsend's Chronological Arrangement of the Bible. It is evident that it took place on the Thursday, on the night of which Jesus was seized: and yet St. John informs us, that on the following morning the Jews would not enter the Governor's palace, lest they should contract such a defilement as would prevent their eating the Passover. According to this Evangelist, our Lord expired at the very time appointed for feeding upon that eminent type of Him, the Paschal lamb. Some distinguished Roman Catholic divines, as Toinard, Calmet, Lamy, and Dupin, maintain, in consequence, that Jesus did not keep the Passover, but only partook of a farewell supper with His Apostles. Our Lord's words, however, in instituting the Sacrament, imply, that the Paschal supper preceded it; and the contrary opinion is hardly reconcilable with his command, *Go and prepare us the Passover*; and with His speech at the feast, *With desire I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you*. I therefore, with Grotius, Hammond, Macknight, and other commentators, believe, that our Lord anticipated the feast by a day; this I conceive St. John, with his usual accuracy, intended to state; and as he wrote with a knowledge of the preceding Gospels, and with the design of supplying their omissions, I consider his testimony as decisive. As our Paschal victim was sacrificed for us, it became Christ to suffer at the hour when the Lamb was eaten. Greswell is probably right in supposing that the message He sent, recorded by Matthew, *My time is at hand*, was designed to remove any surprise at His celebrating the Passover on an unusual day. It may be objected, that as the animals were not to be killed in a private dwelling, but *in the place in which the Lord should choose to put His name*, that is, in the

temple of Jerusalem, Jesus could only keep the Passover in the imperfect manner of the modern Jews, with bitter herbs, and unleavened cakes, omitting the lamb. But Philo, our Lord's contemporary, informs us, that in this instance alone, every Israelite was permitted to act as a priest, and kill his own victim; and though Jesus did not conform to the practice of the Pharisees, and of the majority of the nation, still He was not singular, but followed the calculation of the Sadducees, which several distinguished chronologists maintain to be correct.

The Passover had been instituted by Divine command, the night before the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, for a memorial of their signal Deliverance out of their *house of bondage*, and of the mercy of God in *passing over* their houses, and sparing them when He *passed through the land* of Egypt, and slew all the firstborn in the land, both man and beast. It was natural that such a night, when grief was so marvellously succeeded by joy, and slavery was suddenly exchanged for liberty, should be observed by them in all generations, and Moses expressly ordered that it should be kept *a Feast by an ordinance for ever*, and made it open the ecclesiastical year. It was called also the Feast of unleavened bread, because that was the only kind to be used during the seven days of its continuance, and it was to be kept by all Israelites and proselytes, but no uncircumcised person was permitted to partake of it. The animal on which they were to feast might be either a lamb or a kid, but the former was preferred. It must be *without blemish, a male of the first year*: to be selected out of the flock four days before; and was (after the erection of the Temple) to be slain in one of its courts, between the two evenings, that is, three and five o'clock in the afternoon. It was to be roasted whole, *not a bone of it was to be broken*, and none of it was to be left till morning, so that two families joined together

to eat it, when one was too small. In the time of Josephus, a Paschal society consisted of not less than ten, nor more than twenty individuals. They reclined round a table, that it might be known, as one of their Rabbis observes, that they had passed from bondage into liberty; for the injunction, *Ye shall eat it in haste, with your loins girded, and shoes on your feet* ready to depart, was given up upon their settlement in Canaan. This may teach us not to overrate the importance of the posture in which we communicate, which has unhappily long divided Christians, since our Lord and His Apostles conformed to established custom, by reclining at the Paschal supper. The Feast having been commanded, it seems that the Israelites were allowed to regulate as they pleased the details; and thus it appears that Christ having appointed a supper of bread and wine to be taken in commemoration of His death, has left the mode of distribution and of partaking of it to be regulated according to the discretion of the authorities in His Church. The modern Jews being in their dispersion, as foretold by Hosea, (iii. 4.) without a sacrifice, omit the essential part of the feast as I have observed, yet they minutely record the manner in which it is said to have been celebrated by their ancestors; and the following account from the writings of their Rabbis is inserted, as explanatory of its connection with the Christian Passover which it prefigured, and which was to supersede it. The ceremony began with a cup of wine diluted with water, according to the usage of antiquity preceded by a grace. The party then washed their hands, and the supper was placed upon the table. It consisted of the Peace offerings of the day before, the lamb, two unleavened cakes, a salad of bitter herbs, and a thick sauce of dates, figs, and raisins mixed together with vinegar. This was not prescribed in the Law, but was subsequently introduced to remind them it is said of the clay of Egypt. The Master of the feast next ate a small quantity of



the salad dipped in this sauce, and his example was followed by the rest. The supper was then removed, that the meaning of the ordinance might be explained, and was followed by the recital of the hundred and thirteenth and the hundred and fourteenth Psalms, which was called the Egyptian Hallel, or thanksgiving, and during this singing, a second cup of wine was taken. The hands were again washed, after which the Master blessed and broke one of the unleavened cakes, the bread it was called of poverty and affliction, reserving half a one to eat with the last morsel of the lamb. A piece of this he took with the bitter herbs, and dipped it in the sauce: the others did the same; and this appears to be what in our version is rendered *the sop*. The peace offerings were eaten next; and lastly, the lamb, after which the company again washed their hands, and thanks were given. This was followed by two cups, that of Blessing, equivalent to our saying grace, and that denominated *Hallel*, because they sung over it the remaining Psalms of praise, from the hundred and fifteenth to the hundred and eighteenth inclusive. The ceremony ended with another blessing. Commentators do not agree in the precise time at which our Lord instituted the Commemoration of His death, because the Evangelists do not all record the same particulars, nor those they do in the same order. In St. Luke's account we read of another cup (ver. 17.) previous to the Sacramental one, which, according to Lightfoot, who was deeply versed in Hebrew literature, was either the third or fourth of the Passover. Others keep our Feast distinct from the Jewish, taking His words, *after supper*, literally, and supposing that the cup to be drunk in memory of Christ's precious blood-shedding was a *fifth*; and this is countenanced by the words with which He accompanied it, *Drink ye all of this*; for the Paschal cups they would take of course, this they might otherwise have declined. Upon

the settlement of this point depends the question of Judas's partaking of the Eucharist. It is the general opinion of the Fathers that he did; and it is assumed in our Communion-service; but many think that our Lord, who *knew what was in man*, would not admit into this covenant one who was about to break it in so awful a manner; and the Scripture seems to confirm their opinion, for, according to St. John, Judas went out after receiving the sop, which was evidently a part of the Paschal supper. Certainly in the first two Gospels, the declaration, *he that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same will betray Me*, precedes the institution of the Sacrament, and we may suppose (though it is not there mentioned) that Judas then immediately went out, as we learn from St. John. In the third the remark follows, but it seems placed out of the natural order.

St. Paul declares the mystical signification of the Jewish ordinance (1 Cor. v. 7.) when he calls Christ *our Passover*; the Baptist referred to this type still more than to the daily sacrifice, when he pointed Him out as *the Lamb of God*; and on this account St. Peter (1 Ep. i. 19.) calls Him *a Lamb without blemish and without spot*; and the beloved disciple, *the Lamb that was slain*. (Rev. v.) The benefits derived from His death are visibly prefigured in the Pass-over. The Israelites were preserved from the destroying Angel by the blood of the Lamb sprinkled upon their door-posts, and, upon eating their first passover, were delivered from the house of bondage. Thus only can sinners escape the wrath of a just and holy God, by taking refuge at the foot of the cross, and pleading the *sprinkling of the blood* of Him, of whom the Paschal lamb was the type; (Heb. xii. 24.) and through whose death alone believers are freed from the service of sin, and brought *into the glorious liberty of the children of God*, (Heb. ix. 12. Rom. viii. 21.) to celebrate not a national but an universal, not a temporal but a

spiritual deliverance. We have no difficulty in understanding, that the eating of the Lamb means our feeding in faith upon the Saviour, because He has Himself employed this metaphorical language. None of the Lamb was to be left; and this may signify that we are not to rely in part upon what He has done for us, and in part upon ourselves, but that we must ascribe to Him our whole salvation, and acknowledge Him in all His offices, that is, not only take Him as our Teacher and our Guide, or as our Priest and our Sacrifice, but also obey Him as our Sovereign. The bitter herbs are said to denote repentance, and our willingness, if necessary, to take up our cross and follow Him; and to those who treat such interpretation as fanciful, we may answer, that they seem to be borne out by the example of St. Paul, (1 Cor. v. 7.) who explains the unleavened bread as a type of sincerity and truth, in contradistinction to malice and wickedness, qualities that must accompany faith in Christ, if we hope that He will prove our Passover, that is, our Protector from the wrath of God, and our Redeemer from the worst thralldom, that of the soul. As none who were legally impure might eat the Paschal supper, it behoves Christians to cleanse themselves from all iniquity, and to be pure in their desires as well as in their conduct, when they assemble to partake of the pledges of a Saviour's love. We must consider, as we are reminded in the Service, how "St. Paul exhorteth all persons diligently to try and examine themselves before they presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup;" which, it should be observed, he still calls Bread and Wine, while he speaks of not discerning the Lord's Body.

122. *Supper being ready, the Apostles having again contended for preeminence, their Master washes their feet as an example of humility. Matt. xxvi. 20. Luke xxii. 15—27. John xiii. 1—17.*

Our Saviour's Paschal supper was now *ready*<sup>b</sup>, but it was suspended by an unseasonable discussion among the apostles concerning preeminence. He had already condemned this spirit of ambition by words, and by the example of a child: He now for the last time endeavoured to suppress it by a most affecting and expressive act of humility. He laid aside His cloak, girded Himself with a napkin, and washed their feet, a customary ceremony<sup>c</sup> in the East in that age previous to eating, but performed, when done by others, by inferiors; thus significantly showing that He had been among them *as he that serveth*. If He then, whose superiority they allowed, and whom they emphatically and justly styled *the Teacher* and *the Master*, had condescended to perform to them this menial service, they ought readily, as He told them in imitation of Him, to undertake the meanest and most laborious offices to their fellow-servants. Even as thus put His condescension is wonderful; but how greatly is it heightened, when we consider His superhuman dignity! The Evangelist who records it after a long lapse of years, must have deeply felt it; for, contrary to his usual habit, he thus introduces it, alluding both to His acquired, and His original glory: *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand, and that He was come from God and went to God*. Peter, with his usual ardour, twice refused to suffer his Master to perform an office which he

<sup>b</sup> Γενόμενον, come, not ended, as in our translation. John xxi. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Luke vii. 36. *If she have washed the saints' feet*, 1 Tim. v. 10. *Let me be a servant to wash the feet of my Lord*. 1 Sam. xxv. 41.

regarded as too degrading; but when told, that unless he submitted, he would have *no part with Him*, the same ardour made him exclaim, *Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head*<sup>d</sup>. Our Lord's reply shows that He had a further design in this act, for He took occasion from external washing, to advert to internal purity. His words are thus paraphrased by Bishop Hall; "Ye are my disciples already in respect of the main business of Regeneration, washed from your sins; yet there are some remains of worldly affections which must still be purged away in the best of men, and such is your condition at this time. Ye my disciples are clean; and yet not all of you." Hence we learn that the feet of Judas were washed as well as those of the rest, and that Jesus warned him that he knew what was in his heart.

The custom, which was not designed for servile imitation, was never introduced into the west; and in the east a change of dress has long since abolished it; still under all the variations that time produces, the spirit of the precept may be observed; for we shall never be at a loss for ways of relieving and comforting our Christian brethren in a condescending and self-denying manner. There is no reason for taking the injunction literally, and regarding it as binding, like the Sacrament, upon future believers. It has never been observed as a religious ordinance, and though a representation of it was introduced in the fourth century, and is still kept up by the Pope and some Roman Catholic Sovereigns, this formal washing of poor men's feet on the anniversary of the day when our Lord kept the Passover, is not by themselves regarded as more than an act of Christian humility.

<sup>d</sup> The distinction is strongly marked in the original, in which we have for washing two verbs, *λούω* and *νίπτω*, the first meaning a complete, the latter a partial, ablution.

123. *Jesus foretels that one of the twelve shall betray Him; and, on Judas's leaving the room, declares that now He is glorified. Matt. xxvi. 22—24. Luke xxii. 28—31. John xiii. 18—35.*

Jesus having resumed His place, and explained this lesson of humility, informed the Apostles, that as they had remained with Him during His trials, His Father having assigned unto Him *a kingdom*, He assigned to them the privilege of eating and drinking at His table *in that kingdom*, and granted them the office of judging the twelve tribes of Israel; one excepted, whom He denounced as a traitor, expressing his ingratitude in the figurative language of David, meant primarily concerning Achitophel, to intimate that his treachery had been foretold. John, who reclined next below his Master, tells us, that He was troubled when He said that one of the Twelve would deliver Him up; and it must doubtless have heightened this extreme affliction, that the event was brought about through the agency of a confidential friend. Each anxiously inquired if he were the person; and John, at Peter's suggestion, asked Jesus, leaning over that he might not be overheard. To him He answered, probably in an under voice, that it was the one to whom He was about to give the sop, and from this it appears that Judas must have been nearer to his Master than most of them. At length that disciple himself inquired if he were the person, fearing perhaps that if he alone were silent, suspicion of him would be excited, and Jesus answered, *Thou hast said it*. But this could not have been heard by the rest; for our Lord's next address to him, *What thou doest, do quickly*, while it intimated to him, that his purpose was understood, was expressed in language unintelligible to

the eleven, who differed as to its meaning. Judas, instigated perhaps by anger that he was detected, retired almost immediately to make his arrangement with the priests. Satan is said to have entered into his heart; but he had no power to compel him against his will, which was free to follow its own choice. Before he left the room, his Lord gave him the awful warning, *Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born!* and if he had suffered the warning to have had its proper effect, he would have relinquished his guilty design. The scriptural prediction did not interfere with his free agency: his Master even warned him of the consequences; but Satan tempted him by covetousness, or it might have been by ambition, and he chose to yield to his instigation. The sum for which he agreed is so small, that it is difficult to conceive that it could be an adequate temptation; possibly he hoped, by ingratiating himself with the priests, to obtain future advantages beyond the stipulated remuneration; or, believing Jesus to be the Messiah, he might wish to force him to assume his Sovereignty, thinking that he might then be forgiven, and enjoy the wealth he coveted. Whatever were his motives, he seems not to have anticipated his Master's condemnation to death.

His departure was as it were the commencement of the sufferings of our Lord, who now addressed to His eleven confidential friends His last discourse, by which He intended to infix in their minds truths, which, ignorant as they were, and overcome with affliction, they could not fully comprehend at the time, yet sufficiently to derive from them the hope of future consolation. These dying words were followed by a Prayer, in which He recommended to His heavenly Father Himself these His Apostles, and all future Believers. To St. John we are indebted for the preservation of both, and no part of his Gospel, or indeed of the inspired volume,

is more interesting, and more capable of *building us up in our most holy Faith*. As this Evangelist does not notice our Lord's supper, we are not certain where we ought to insert it ; but I shall follow Archbishop Newcome's Arrangement, to which I perceive no objection.

The discourse is primarily and specially addressed to the Eleven, and the promise that they should perform greater works than Himself, is made to them as the future propagators of His Religion ; still, in a great degree it concerns the believers of every age, for on all of them is bestowed in a measure the gift of God's Holy Spirit, and mutual love is the duty, and ought to be the characteristic as much of the meanest Christians, as of the Apostles themselves. These are Christ's last words ; yet not His own approaching suffering, but their sorrow, engrosses His thoughts. He does not mention by name His Death, or His Cross ; but the first he calls His departure to His Father ; the second, His glorification. It was the peculiar object of this Evangelist to prove that Jesus was the Christ and the Son of God, from His actions and discourses ; and in no discourses are they more plainly revealed than in this final one, in which He asserted what no mere man could justly assert, *He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father ; He that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father ; and, If I depart, I will send the Comforter unto you, and He will glorify Me*. This Discourse and Prayer may be regarded as the strongholds of Orthodoxy with respect to those essential tenets, and yet, strange as it may seem, the Anti-Trinitarians press even them into their service, because they contain two passages, which detached from the context would appear to favour their system : *My Father is greater than I* : and, *This is Life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent*. As the attributes of Divinity are claimed by our Lord throughout the discourse and prayer, these two passages cannot really con-



tradict the scope of the whole; an orthodox explanation must be sought, and it is immediately found in the contrast between our Lord's temporary abasement, when *He humbled Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.* An earthly monarch is greater than his ambassador, but then it is only in office, not in nature; because both are men, and throughout this Gospel Jesus speaks of Himself as a Legate, teaching and acting according to His Father's instructions. Such is, I apprehend, the true meaning of the Text, but it was often quoted by the Ante-Nicene Fathers in proof of the subordination in nature of the second Person in the Trinity to the first, an idea conveyed in the terms *paternity* and *filiation*. The Father they called Ἀὐτοθεός, God in Himself—the source of Deity; the Son, Θεὸς ἐκ Θεοῦ, God of God,—rather God out of God; a term which they introduced into the Creed, and which Bishop Bull in his elaborate Defence of the Ante-Nicene Faith has shown to be compatible with the essential equality of the Two. The other declaration, The Father is the only true God, is not to be so strictly taken as to exclude the Son, since St. John in his first Epistle (v. 20.) gives the same appellation to the Son, and the Father is called *the only Potentate, who only hath immortality*; (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.) in the same Epistle in which the Son is declared to be *God manifest in the flesh*. (iii. 16.) So far indeed were the early Christians from adopting the Unitarian interpretation, that their tendency was to the contrary extreme, and the first heretics, the Gnostics, went so far as to deny that our Saviour had a real human body. This tenet of Christ's simple humanity has never been professed by any large denomination of Christians, nor is it surprising, for it annihilates the essence of His religion; a few detached texts like these being all that can be brought forward in its support, while the opposite

scheme of His Divinity pervades the Gospels as well as the Epistles.

The same Critics who refuse to acknowledge an Almighty Saviour, would also deprive us of the Comforter, whom He promised to supply His place. While they reject the Divinity of the second Person of the Trinity, they deny even the existence of the third, whom they confound either with His own gifts, or with the Father. This attempt is certainly easier than the former, because in some passages the Giver is really put for the Gift; and as the Holy Spirit did not become incarnate, there are not so many texts respecting Him as respecting the Son. Still this discourse alone is sufficient to satisfy an unprejudiced enquirer, that the Comforter whom Christ declares He will send from the Father to dwell with believers, is distinct from them both. Though Πνεῦμα, Spirit, be in Greek a neuter noun, it is here followed with the masculine pronoun, and the offices of feeling, teaching, and reproving are personal, while the Person who teaches the future, and calls the past to remembrance, cannot but be Divine, and yet cannot be the same as He from whom He proceeds, and from whom He is distinguished in the forms both of Baptism and of Benediction. The miraculous gifts ascribed to the Spirit by St. Paul also imply His Divinity, and He is not an unconscious channel through which they flow, but *He divideth them severally* to the various members of the Church *as He will*. The Nicene Creed ended with a bare acknowledgment of the Holy Ghost, but we repeat it as enlarged at the Council of Constantinople, with the declaration that He is both “the Lord and the Giver of Life,” and “proceedeth from the Father.” The addition, “and from the Son,” is first found in the early Gallic Liturgy, and we may regret that it was introduced into the Roman, since the Papal adoption of it. The truth however of the proposition is manifest to any reader of the Scriptures, for in the very verse that declares the Proces-

sion of the Spirit from the Father, the Son says, I will send Him, and there is, throughout the whole economy of Grace, among the Three, an identity not only of will, but of agency and nature.

The Holy Spirit is called Παράκλητος, Paraclete, a term, like Λόγος, Logos, peculiar to St. John. It is difficult to find for this, as for that, an adequate translation. *Comforter*, taken from the Vulgate, is suitable in many respects, especially in this consolatory discourse; but even here it is also said, that He is *to teach* and to *guide them into all the truth*, and therefore Monitor is preferred by some Translators. Both, however, are too narrow to express the whole compass of gifts which this Divine substitute of our Lord bestows, and therefore as the idea to be conveyed is that of one who is to assist and plead their cause, the meaning is, I think, best represented by Advocate, as opposed to Accuser. That term too will suit our Lord; for we must recollect, that we must find one applicable to both, as He calls the Holy Ghost another Paraclete with a reference to Himself, and it is applied to Him by St. John in his first Epistle; *If we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*. As the Son and the Spirit are called by the same title, the same office of Intercession is ascribed to both. In the Epistle to the Hebrews it is written, *The Son ever liveth to make intercession for us*; (Heb. vii. 25.) in that to the Romans, *the Spirit maketh intercession for us*. (Rom. xi. 2.) But they are Advocates in different courts; the Son pleads His own merits in His Father's presence, and thereby propitiates Him, and renders Him gracious to us. The Spirit has for His province the human heart, and pleads with men, convincing them of sin, and constraining them by the terrors of the law, and the mercy of the Gospel, to lay aside their enmity against the Father; and acknowledging their need both of Jesus as a Saviour, and of the Holy Spirit

to direct them for help in time of need, seek Him at *His throne of grace*. Having excited in such the desire to pray, He helpeth their infirmities by interceding for them, *with groanings that cannot be uttered*; (Rom. viii. 26.) and these earnest longings after spiritual blessings, which they know not how to express, are understood and approved by God, *Who searcheth the heart*, and looketh not to the language or manner, but to the matter, of their petitions.

Jesus first spoke of His Death, and gave them to understand that it was approaching, but spoke of it in enigmatical language, saying, *Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him*; for, however ignominious it might appear, it would eminently display both His own glory, and His Father's; and this it did by explaining the real character of each, as well as by His Resurrection and Ascension. He affectionately took leave of them as *dear children*, and enjoined them to show their attachment, not by ineffectual sorrow, but by obeying His new commandment of mutual love. He had shown on a former occasion, that the Law required them to *love their neighbour as themselves*, including under that term all mankind. He could not therefore mean, by *a new commandment*, Philanthropy; though this is maintained by almost all the commentators, who suppose that new is used as equivalent to excellent; or that the expression is justified, because the duty is enforced by new motives. But the virtue He recommends is, I conceive, Love of the Brotherhood, and that not the Brotherhood we inherit from Adam, but that which we derive from Christ; a virtue which had never been heard of before. From the beginning the Moral Law bound men to love one another, as partakers of the same common nature, but the Evangelical bindeth believers to love all Christians, as partakers of the same common faith in Christ<sup>e</sup>. *A new commandment I give*

<sup>e</sup> Saunderson's Sermon ad Aulam, on *Honour all men, Love the brotherhood*.

unto you, *Love*—not your neighbour, but—*one another*. By this, He added, *shall all men know that ye are my disciples*: and we find, long after, that it was a common remark among their enemies, “See how these Christians love one another.” We must feel a love of good will to all men ; to the wicked, and even to our enemies ; but our special regard is to be reserved for the genuine followers of our Redeemer, who are *not strangers and foreigners*, but *fellow-citizens*, heirs of the same inheritance, and members of the same body ; and this special love will be in proportion both to the degree in which our brethren are renewed after the image of their Creator, and to our love of Him who begat them. *Let us do good unto all men, but specially to the household of faith*, is the injunction of one Apostle. (Gal. vi. 10.) *Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten*, is the declaration of another, who is supposed to have possessed in a higher degree than the rest this attractive characteristic of our faith, and shows himself most anxious to inculcate it. (1 John v. 1.) In countries where all *profess* Christianity, the two virtues are apt to be confounded ; but St. Peter carefully marks the distinction, *add to brotherly kindness, charity* ; (2 Pet. i. 7.) and *above all things have fervent charity among yourselves* : (1 Pet. iv. 9.) while St. John makes the Christian’s assurance of salvation depend upon the performance of this duty. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren*. (1 John iii. 14.) Charity, that is, Philanthropy, and Brotherly Love, proceed from different principles ; *Compassion* is the source of the former ; *Approbation* of the latter. It may be also called *New*, on account of the degree in which it was to be practised ; for Christ afterwards said, *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you* ; a love which showed itself by all self-denying services, even at last unto the surrender of life.

124. *Jesus foretels the Fall and Recovery of Peter. Matt. xxvi. 31—33. Mark xiv. 30, 31. Luke xxii. 31—38. John xiii. 36—38.*

The declaration, *Whither I go, as I said unto the Jews, I say unto you, ye cannot come*, had distressed them all, and Peter, with his usual eagerness, thinking not of his Master's death, but of His departure to some other country, interrupted Him with the question, *Whither goest Thou?* Jesus in reply thus explained the former saying, *Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me hereafter*; showing that what was denied altogether to the Jews, was to believers only postponed. Peter could not follow then, because the work assigned to him was not accomplished, nor had he yet the courage of a martyr. Jesus then declared that they would all be overcome with temptation that night, and *be scattered abroad*, when, as Zechariah (xiii. 7.) had predicted, God should *smite the Shepherd*; but that after He had risen from the dead, He would go before them into Galilee. Peter, confident in his own strength, persisted in maintaining, that whatever others might do, he would never desert Him, but would lay down his life for His sake. Our Lord replied, that Satan had sought to sift them all; but that He had prayed for him in particular, that his faith might not fail, (that is, not finally, like that of Judas; for it was overcome for a season,) and admonished him, when restored, to strengthen his brethren. He assured him, when he declared his readiness to follow Him to prison or to death, that he knew himself so little, that, to avoid even the possibility of danger, he would that very night thrice deny Him. Peter only renewed his asseveration; and this self-confidence, which does not seem to have been shaken

even by the prediction, was the first step to his fall. Jesus then reminded them all, that when He had sent them out before, they had not been allowed to make any provision for their journey, yet had every where found an hospitable reception. Now, on the contrary, they must look forward to hardships, and even to persecution; they must take whatever they had, purse and bag, for few would be disposed to assist them, and a sword for their protection would seem even more necessary than a cloak. Upon this they showed Him two swords which they happened to have, (arms being probably then carried by travellers for their security.) He replied, *It is enough*; and the reply is considered by some as justifying self-defence against robbers and other violaters of the law, though not in opposition to the civil authority. Two swords were not enough for the approaching attack, if He had meditated resistance; and this we know, from His reproof to Peter for using one of them, was not His intention. His meaning was not taken, and He did not deem it necessary to enter into any explanation. The language also is ambiguous; the best explanation seems to be, that it is a common Hebrew mode of stopping the unseasonable remarks of another, and that He intended by it to close the conversation, as they had misconceived Him, and the event would soon correct their mistake.

125. *Jesus institutes the Sacrament of the Commemoration of His Death.* *Matt.* xxvi. 26—29. *Mark* xiv. 23—25. *Luke* xx. 19, 20.

The Paschal supper being finished, the Lord instituted His own, and the name reminds us both of the Person who ordained it, and of the hour when it was originally celebrated.

According to Hales, Jesus substituted His Supper for the third course of the Passover, but as it was not to be connected with, but to supersede that Feast, I prefer the opinion, that it was independent of it, and followed. This opinion seems to be confirmed by the remark, that as He was in the habit before any meal of first thanking the gracious Giver of food, so the Evangelist designed to mark that this is another supper, by writing, that *as they were eating Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and He took the cup, and gave thanks*. It is also observed, that He did not Himself partake of either. It is reasonable to suppose, that the cup was given immediately after the bread as at the Passover, although Newcome in his Harmony, I conceive by a misconception of St. Luke's narrative, has inserted between them a portion of our Lord's last discourse. This is so solemn and so important an act of worship, and its intent has been so perverted by the Church, from which our Reformers held it to be their duty, on that account as well as on many others, to withdraw, that it requires in a work explanatory of the Gospels a fuller consideration than most of the Articles of our Faith. I shall state, therefore, as briefly as I can, from the Formularies of the Church of England, and from the expositions of some of her most approved Divines, as the Archbishops Tillotson and Sharp, and Dr. Waterland, the nature and meaning of the Lord's Supper<sup>f</sup>, the correctness of which is established by its accordance with the Word of God. It is called *Sacrament* from *Sacramentum*, the Latin word for the military oath, which bound the Roman soldiers, because it pledged the participant to allegiance and obedience to his Master, *who has bought him with a price, whose he is*, and whom he ought to serve :

<sup>f</sup> A chain of citations from the Fathers and Schoolmen, to a very few alone of whom the limits assigned to this work have permitted me to refer, may be found in Abp. Usher's Challenge to a Jesuit, Bp. Taylor's Dissuasive from Popery, Abp. Tillotson's Discourse against Transubstantiation, and Dr. Waterland's Review of the Doctrine of the Eucharist.



the *Eucharist*, because it represents the event which above all others demands thanksgiving; and the *Communion*, because, as St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 17.) expresses himself, we are therein *partakers of the same Loaf*: and are so reminded, that all Christians, whatever may be their external differences, should regard themselves as members of one family, of which Christ is the Head. It is a melancholy reflection, that what was instituted as a bond of union, has become a main cause of division, and has separated not only Protestants from Romanists, but from one another; the Lutheran Church from the Reformed abroad, and Episcopalians from Presbyterians at home. Our Lord's appointment of this solemn Commemoration of His Death, is in itself a strong presumption that He was the Messiah; for what impostor or enthusiast would wish to perpetuate the memory of the ignominious termination of His life by the decree of the magistrate? It is, however, more than this, for "why should not His followers rather commemorate His miraculous Birth, triumphant Resurrection, or glorious Ascension? Certainly the mode of commemoration is still more extraordinary, for it is not by a Fast, but by a Feast; not with mourning, but with joy and thankfulness. Deny the atonement and its consequences, and this manner of *showing forth the Lord's death* is absolutely inexplicable; admit it, and all is natural, and in the highest degree significant<sup>g</sup>."

The institution of this Sacrament has been described by the first three Evangelists; and we infer from the silence of the fourth, that they had transmitted all necessary information. We have another account of it in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, (chap. xi.) which St. Paul received immediately from Christ; and this special Revelation proves both the importance and the perpetuity of the ordinance. His words, *as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye*

<sup>g</sup> Scott's Commentary on Matthew xxvi.

*do show the Lord's death till He come*, demonstrate that this Sacrament was designed not for the Apostles only, but for believers in every age; and, accordingly, with the solitary exception of the "Friends," all denominations of Christians, though some exalt it too high, and others degrade it too low, agree in retaining it as an indispensable part of divine service. It is indeed "a badge of Christian men's profession;" (Art. xii.) for though we may attend a place of worship, we cannot be considered as members of the Church, unless we sometimes comply with this last command of its Founder, who hath been pleased, as Augustin remarks, to unite "His people into a society by two Sacraments, most easy to be observed, most important in their meaning; the one of which, Baptism, admits into covenant with Him; the other, a devout Commemoration of His death, marks continuance in it." He has left each national branch of His Church to adopt or reject rites and ceremonies, as appears to itself most conducive to edification. But the Sacraments being "ordained by Christ Himself," Christ alone has the power to abrogate. No particular form having been enjoined by Him, the manner of administering and receiving, and all that is circumstantial, may vary in different times and places; but the essential parts, the Water in the one, and the Bread and the Wine in the other, no Church can have a right to omit. And yet that corrupt Church, which arrogates to herself exclusively the title of Catholic, and is distinguished by so many doctrinal errors, had, long before the Reformation, taken away the cup from the laity. It has no custom more difficult to defend; for its divines confess, that they cannot in this instance, as they vainly attempt in others, plead antiquity in their favour; and a sufficient confutation is conveyed in the thirtieth Article of our Church, which affirms, that "Both parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christian men

alike." This withholding the cup naturally arose out of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. To prevent any profanation of what was considered to be the real body of the Lord, small wafers were substituted for bread, and put at once into the mouth of the communicants by the officiating minister, instead of being delivered into the hand; but no expedient could be devised against the occasional spilling of the wine. The practice began in the twelfth century, but it was first vindicated by authority in 1414, by the Council of Constance. One of its decrees allows, that the faithful in the primitive Church did receive in both kinds, yet the practice of giving to the laity only in one being in their opinion reasonably introduced to avoid some dangers and scandals, it appointed it to continue. It is remarkable, that a Pope, in the fifth century, having heard that the Manichæans, who held it a sin to taste wine, did not partake of the cup, decreed, that all persons should either communicate entirely, or be entirely excluded, for that such a dividing of one and the same Sacrament could not be done without heinous sacrilege<sup>b</sup>. In the Council of Trent the power of granting the use of the cup to any nation, and the conditions of the grant, were finally left to the Pope, as a question not of Doctrine but of Discipline. To meet the objection of Pope Gelasius the modern Romanists assert, that the Apostles partook of the bread as Laymen, and were ordained Priests by the act of receiving the cup. But this gratuitous supposition is confuted by our Lord's command, *Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the new Covenant which is shed for many for the Remission of sins*; for His words show that they were to drink not on account of their office, but of their sinful nature; and the reason applies in every age to all believers who are sinners, consequently, therefore, to them all. It appears moreover, that they were not made Presbyters till

<sup>b</sup> Gelasius, de duabus naturis Christi.

after the Resurrection, when their Master breathed upon them, and said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. St. Paul's language shows that the Sacrament is to be received in both kinds; and our Lord Himself, in the Synagogue of Capernaum, spake as much of the necessity of drinking His blood as of eating His flesh. To vindicate the practice the Romanist assumes, that Christ is received whole and entire in the bread alone, so that those to whom that only is given are defrauded thereby of no saving grace; but this argument proves too much, as it would equally answer for withholding the cup from the clergy.

Enthusiasm naturally seizes upon metaphor, and gives it a literal sense; and we may easily conceive, that when writers for a succession of ages have spoken in a declamatory way of the necessity of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, trying to surpass each other in flights of devotion, they might end in maintaining as an article of faith that the bread and wine were by consecration converted into what they represent. This doctrine is called Transubstantiation, because it asserts, that the bread and wine lose their own substance, and become the real body and blood of Christ; yet, as they still appear to be the same as before consecration, this hypothesis is helped out by another, that though the *Substance* be changed, the *Accidents* or *Qualities* remain<sup>1</sup>. If our Lord had not used the words, *This is my body*, preceded sometime before by a discourse, in which He declared, that he who did not eat *His body* and drink *His blood* had no life in him; so extraordinary a notion could hardly have ever prevailed. And as it is, it is surprising that any should have adopted a conclusion as revolting to the Feelings, as it is contradictory both to Reason and the Senses, since a complete solution of the difficulty, if there be any in the words, may be found in

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is substantially taken from Hey's Lectures, iv. p. 320.

figurative language. Cicero says<sup>k</sup>, “when we call grain Ceres, and wine Bacchus, we only use an ordinary figure of speech; but do you think,” he adds, “that any one is so devoid of sense as to believe that what he feeds upon is a God?” It is lamentable to think, that an opinion, which a Heathen considered as too absurd to be received, should be maintained by the largest society of professing Christians as an article of faith. A doctrine so monstrous could only be brought into a regular form in an age of ignorance and superstition. The invention of it is ascribed to Paschasius, a French monk of the ninth century, and it was introduced into our country in the reign of the Conqueror by Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury; but the name does not occur before the thirteenth century, when the doctrine received the sanction of the Church, A. D. 1215, as represented by the third Lateran Council. Objections against it gradually disappeared, and the idea of a sensible presence of Christ in His Church was henceforward embodied in a visible image, the sacred Host, in honour of which the new festival of Corpus Christi was invented. Transubstantiation, though it might not have been intended or foreseen, exalted above measure the office of the Priest, by giving Him the power, as one of them expressed it, to make God. Christ, they taught, was in this Sacrament actually brought down from heaven. Sanctification was made dependent upon the will of him who offered Him as a sacrifice, and a belief in this mystery came to be regarded as the sum and substance of religion, and the receiving the blessed body of the Lord a substitute for fulfilling His commandments. The doctrine was fully established by the Council of Trent, which maintained, in opposition to Protestants, that there is no contradiction between Christ’s body being always *naturally* at God’s right hand, and *sacramentally* in other places; that the whole body of Christ

<sup>k</sup> De Natura Deorum.

exists in every particle, both of the bread and of the wine; and that the same worship that is paid to the true God, is after consecration due to the elements. The Romanists appeal both to the written Word, and the unwritten, as they call Tradition; and certainly some of the Fathers have expressed themselves in what, with our experience, we should call incautious language. By giving prominence to their strongest passages, and keeping out of sight others that would qualify them, they certainly may be shown to favour in some a literal interpretation. Yet what Protestant could desire a more decisive statement than this rule, given by Augustin de Doctrina Christiana, (iii. 16.) to the Western Church? "Understand spiritually what I have spoken. You are not to eat this body which you see, and drink the blood which those who are about to crucify Me will shed. I recommend to you a Sacrament, which, spiritually understood, will give you life," and in his book against Adimantus, he writes, "our Lord did not scruple to say, This is my body, when He gave the sign of His body." The same rule was delivered to the Greek Church by Origen; in his Homily on Leviticus, "The understanding our Saviour's words of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, according to the letter, is a *letter that killeth*." Cardinal Du Perron observes, that Origen writes in this passage like a Heretic, and, as he denies his authority, I will strengthen it with that of the ecclesiastical historian Theodoret, whose orthodoxy has never been questioned. In his first Dialogue, he tells us, that "Christ would have those who partake of the divine mysteries, not to attend to the nature of things which are seen, but by the change of names to believe the change that is made by grace; for He honoured the symbols with the name of His body and blood, not changing nature, but adding grace to nature." And in his second Dialogue, that "the mystical symbols after consecration do not pass out of their own nature, for they

remain in their former substance, figure, and appearance, and may be seen and handled even as before." To those who wish to know the opinion of earlier authors, I transcribe from Justin Martyr's third disputation with the Jew Trypho; "The bread of the Eucharist was a figure;" and from Clement of Alexandria's Pædagogue; "The blood of Christ is two-fold; the one is carnal, by which we are redeemed from death; the other spiritual, by which we are anointed."

The chief Scriptural argument of the Romanist lies in the words, *This is my body*; yet it is remarkable, that Bellarmine, their most eminent controversialist, grants that Transubstantiation cannot be established from the words of the institution, though their later writers quote this passage as an incontrovertible proof. Cardinal Caietan, (in Aquinæ, s. iii. 75.) the opponent of Luther, went so far as to say, that there is nothing in the Gospel which enforces any man to take the words in a proper and not a metaphorical sense; but that the Church having understood them in the former<sup>m</sup>, they are to be so explained. Another Cardinal of an earlier date, who took part in the proceedings of the Council of Constance, Peter Ailly, (in Canon. Miss. lect. 40.) says plainly, that there is no Scriptural evidence for the Doctrine, and that the contrary is more rational and free from absurdity; (in 4 Sent. quest. 6. art. 2.) and Biel, (in Canon. Miss. 40.) allowing this, resolves the belief of Transubstantiation into some other Revelation which he supposes the Church to have. Common sense, however, requires a figurative interpretation; for otherwise, unless we assume that this first most solemn celebration of the Sacrament differed from all repetitions of it, our Saviour must

<sup>m</sup> These words were expunged from the Roman edition of his works by Pius V. Tillotson, in his Discourse against Transubstantiation, writes, that Bellarmine, Suarez, and Vasquez acknowledge Scotus, the great Schoolman, to have said, that this doctrine cannot evidently be proved from Scripture, which Bellarmine grants to be not improbable, and Suarez and Vasquez allow that Durandus has said as much.

have held Himself in His own hands, and distributed His own body while yet speaking, and before it was broken: an incredible supposition. Even if we allow that He spoke prospectively, it is impossible that a Priest by prayer could bring down His glorified body from heaven, separating it from both His soul and His divinity, and if impossible for one, that it could be done at the same moment by many in several places. If we may not take Christ's words figuratively, then we must maintain also that He was really a Vine, as He called Himself that very evening. The Roman Catholics themselves are obliged to quit the letter for the spirit, in explaining the other half of the same Sacrament; for our Lord does not say, *this wine*, but, *this cup is my blood*; and having given it to them, He called it, though according to their interpretation the change had previously taken place, γενήμα τῆς ἀπμέλου, this product of the vine. St. Paul also (1 Cor. xi. 26—28.) speaks three times of the material substance, after consecration, as still Bread. It would have better suited the genius of our language to have said, This *means* or *represents* my body; but in that which was spoken by our Lord, there is no similar term°, and the idea is expressed by the substantive verb, *is*, and even that is often omitted, being understood. And the very ordinance which they had just been celebrating

° The thing which signifies is wont to be called by that which it signifies, writes Augustine against Faustus, xx. 21. Thus in the Old Testament, Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Gen. xli. 26, 27. says of the kine and of the ears, that they *are* years; in the New we read, that the stars *are* the angels, and the candlesticks *are* the churches, Rev. i. 20. and in explaining His Parables, Christ says, the seed *is* the word, the field *is* the world, &c. The English reader may object to this statement the occasional use of the word *means*, as in St. Mark ix. 10; "questioning what the rising from the dead should *mean*," but it ought to have been rendered *be*, as in the original the verb is ἐστὶ. This word, said Moses, is the bread which the Lord hath given us to eat: thou seest that the eternal Word of God is the food of the soul. I cite this passage from Philo (de Allegoriis) to show the resemblance in this respect between the style of the Bible, and the works of the Alexandrian Jew.



alone must have accustomed the Apostles to this idiom; for the Lamb itself was called (Exodus xii. 11.) the Passover, though it was only the *representation* or *sign* of it; and we know that the name was universally transferred to the first which commemorated that event. They do not appear to have been perplexed by the declaration, nor did they desire it to be explained: they had been reprov'd before for a literal interpretation of our Lord's warning, *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*, (Matt. xvi. 6—9.) and had seen how their countrymen had erred at Capernaum, when, upon His saying, *the bread that I will give is my flesh*, they exclaimed, *How can this Man give us His flesh to eat!*

That discourse has been often brought forward in support of Transubstantiation; yet, as I have observed above, many even of the Roman Catholic writers reject this application of it, and therein show prudence; for that interpretation would furnish a strong argument for infant communion, which they have long left off, and would be directly opposed to the withholding the cup from the laity. It is surprising, that when our Saviour Himself supplies the key to unlock His meaning, any who read His words, *The flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*; should still cling to the literal sense, which does not, if we could pass over the impossibility, afford a reasonable doctrine, as flesh is only fit food for the body, and cannot nourish, for it cannot be conveyed into, the soul, and if the nourishment be only spiritual, so surely ought to be the eating. It is therefore not literally, but only after a heavenly and spiritual manner, that “the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the supper, and the mean whereby it is eaten is Faith.” (Art. xxviii.) It is material also to observe, in confutation of the literal interpretation, that the Romanist endeavours to escape from one of the difficulties that beset it, by suppressing an important part of the form of Con-

secration. Their Priest stops at *This is my body*, whereas our Saviour proceeds to say, *given*, or, as reported by St. Paul, *broken for you*, that is, offered up to God in sacrifice; and surely these additional omitted words are decisive, for it was only on the Cross that His body was broken and His blood shed. At the Resurrection, when He showed that He had power to resume the life that He had laid down, "He took again His body with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith He ascended into heaven, where He sitteth" our Priest and Mediator, "until He return to judge all men at the last day," (Art. iv.) and that body which was for a very short season broken, is now glorified. Dr. Hales maintains, that these present participles, *διδόμενον, χλωμένον, ἐκχυνόμενον*, are to be taken as futures, and appeals to the authority of the Canon of the Mass, which retains the whole of Christ's words respecting the blood, and renders *ἐκχυνόμενον, effundetur*, not shed, but which is about to be shed, following in this faithfully the Vulgate translation. Those who are not acquainted with the Roman Service, will learn with astonishment that it cannot be reconciled with Transubstantiation, no doubt because it is substantially anterior to the doctrine. It is only the Elevation, Adoration, and other ceremonies required in the Rubric, which is of a much later date, that give a countenance to this dogma, for *after* consecration, the Priest prays God, that "as He had accepted the sacrifice of His just servant Abel, and the holy sacrifice of Abraham, the immaculate victim (host), and that which Melchisedek the High Priest offered, so He would deign to look with a propitious and serene countenance on what is offered out of His gifts, a pure holy immaculate victim (host,) the holy bread of eternal life, and the cup of perpetual salvation<sup>p</sup>." I conclude in the words of Augustin, "How shall I send up

<sup>p</sup> It may be satisfactory to some to read the Prayer in the original Latin. I have therefore transcribed it from the Missal, corrected in conformity with the

my hands to heaven to take hold of Christ sitting there? Send thy faith, and thou hast hold of Him. Why preparest thou thy teeth? Believe, and thou hast eaten: for this is to eat the living bread. He that believeth on Christ eateth Christ, he is invisibly fed <sup>q</sup>.”

Transubstantiation is declared, in the twenty-eighth Article of our Church, both “to be repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, and to overthrow the nature of a Sacrament,” which, according to the ancient definition, consists of a sign, and the thing it signifies. This has never been disputed in that of Baptism; but the Roman Catholic doctrine excludes from the Lord’s Supper its outward visible sign. According to our Catechism, our souls are strengthened and refreshed in this Sacrament “by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.” The Body and Blood of Christ, therefore, are only the benefits of Christ’s Passion, our eating and drinking of that Body and Blood our being made partakers of those Benefits, and the mouth whereby we thus eat and drink is our true and lively faith. “This,” says Archbishop Sharp<sup>r</sup>, “is plainly the sense of our Church, in this matter. This is certain, because she hath expressly affirmed that Christ hath but one Body, and that that Body is now “in heaven, and not here.” Anxious, however, that her members should not degrade the Sacrament to an ordinance, she does not hesitate to state, that “the Body and Blood are verily and indeed taken and received,” but to guard

decree of the Council of Trent, which has been used ever since in all Roman Catholic places of worship. This Prayer, which has not been altered, is precisely the same in the *Liber Sacramentorum* of Gregory the Great, and is supposed to have been in use before Pope Gelasius. *Offerimus præclaræ majestati tuæ de tuis donis ac datis hostiam puram, hostiam sanctam, hostiam immaculatam, panem sanctum vitæ æternæ et calicem salutis perpetuæ; supra quæ propitio ac sereno vultu respicere digneris: et accepta habere, sicuti accepta habere dignatus es munera pueri tui justi Abel, et sacrificium Patriarchæ nostri Abrahæ et quod tibi obtulit summus Sacerdos tuus Melchisedech, sanctum sacrificium, immaculatam hostiam.*

<sup>q</sup> Tract. 50. in *Evang. Joan.*

<sup>r</sup> Vol. vii. Sermon xv.

the declaration against misconception, she is careful to show that the taking is figurative, by adding, "by the faithful," and maintains that the wicked and such as be void of a lively faith are in no wise partakers of Christ, but rather to their condemnation "do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing." (Art. xxix.)

The Opponent, defeated in Argument, takes refuge in Mystery; and lays open the vital doctrines of Revelation to the attacks of infidels, by classing them with this dogma as equally indefensible by reasoning, and incredible except to faith. This demand of implicit assent is one of the main causes of the notorious prevalence of infidelity in Roman Catholic countries; for persons in communion with the Pope, not having been taught to *give a reason of the hope that is in them*, when they discover the absurdity of Transubstantiation, and are told that the exercise of the understanding in matters of religion is forbidden, receive upon the authority of the Church this and whatever doctrine she requires with as much confidence as the truths of holy Writ, or reject with it the whole of Christianity as a fable. They have never learnt, and infidels will not allow, the difference between doctrines being *above*, and *contrary to*, reason. That the wafer, used instead of bread, while to the eye and taste it seems to have undergone no alteration, is human flesh, and that the same identical body can be offered up at the same instant in several places, are positions irreconcilable to reason; nor is it less so, we grant, that the same Being can be three and one, in the same sense of the words. But the true doctrine of the Trinity, which, while it maintains the Unity of the Divine Essence, affirms that in that Unity are three Personal distinctions, though it be above the power of our intellect to fathom, is not like this dogma contradictory to it.

Transubstantiation, however, is not only a stumbling-block, which has driven many from the privileges and consolations

of the Gospel into infidelity: to those who acquiesce in it, their belief is not a mere inoperative error, but brings in its train many pernicious consequences unfavourable to holiness, and the full development of the Christian character. When it is believed that the wafer is changed into the actual body of our Redeemer, we can neither blame nor wonder at the piety that reserves and enshrines it. With this change is connected the doctrine of its being offered up as a Sacrifice, and therefore it is called from *Hostia*, the Latin word for victim, the *Host*. Hence naturally followed an undue exaltation of the Minister's office, for a victim requires a Sacrificer; nor is it extraordinary that one who, it is believed, can convert a wafer into God, and then offer Him upon an altar, should be regarded with greater reverence than is due from one fallible mortal to another. History has proved the injurious effects of these doctrines on both Clergy and Laity, and Protestant authors enlarge upon them, but few sufficiently consider that they eclipse the glory of the Intercessory office of our Lord, who is the only Priest of the new Covenant, (in the proper acceptation of the term, that is, a sacrificer, ἱερεὺς, not an elder or presbyter, Πρεσβύτερος,) and so bring us back by an unexpected road to a Levitical priesthood, and *the weak and beggarly elements* of the Law. To do away these erroneous notions, our Reformers substituted for Altar, *Table*, and have carefully avoided all phrases that might foster superstition. From Transubstantiation has proceeded the belief avowed by the Roman Church of what is technically called *Opus operatum*, that is, that the Body and Blood possess an intrinsic virtue, which does not depend upon the disposition of the receiver, but operates upon all who do not obstruct the operation by mortal sin. It is difficult even to conceive a more pernicious tenet. Its obvious tendency is to substitute the form of religion for its power, and to give a false

and premature security to a guilty conscience when mercifully awakened to a sense of danger, which, if duly improved, might lead it to rely not upon this sacramental feeding, or any act of its own, but on the Sacrifice of Himself offered by the Saviour upon the Cross. So deeply rooted is this fatal error, and so congenial a soil has it found in our fallen nature, ever ready to evade, if possible, the necessity of leading a holy life, that an indefinite feeling of this kind has in our country survived the downfall of popery; for unhappily too many professing Protestants seek in death the Sacrament they have neglected during life, not from a just appreciation of it, but as a charm or preservative from Damnation: an error which derives no countenance from the Church of England, which expressly declares, (Art. xxv.) that “the Sacraments have a wholesome effect or operation in such only as worthily receive the same.”

Having shown, as I hope satisfactorily, that, to speak with Chrysostom, “Christ honoured the visible symbols with the name of His Body and Blood, not changing the nature but adding Grace to Nature,” I proceed to consider the design of the institution; and this we learn from our Lord’s command, *Do this in remembrance of Me*. But in what does this Remembrance consist? Clearly it requires a correct notion both of what our Lord is, and what He has done for us. And we learn from other passages in Scripture, that the *only-begotten Son of the Father is God manifest in the flesh*, (1 Tim. iii. 16.) and that His death was a *Propitiation for the sins of the whole world*. (1 John ii. 3.) Such a Remembrance, when made with a proper disposition of mind, is at once an act of gratitude for this inestimable benefit, and of humiliation for the sin that rendered it necessary; since by these “visible words,” to use an expression of Augustin, we declare that this all-sufficient Sacrifice can alone procure our acceptance. A due Commemoration of our Lord’s death

therefore, including as it does a public avowal of the leading doctrines of our religion, is a protest against infidelity, and even the natural tendency of such a commemoration cannot fail to be beneficial. But our Lord also said of the bread, *This is my Body given for you*, and of the cup, *This is my Blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you*. New Covenant, of course, suggests the recollection of a former one; and the occasion when it was instituted, after the Paschal Supper, eaten to commemorate the destroying Angel's passing over the houses of the Israelites, the doors of which had been marked with the blood of a lamb, carries our thoughts back to that great National deliverance, which we are thus taught to consider as a Typical one. Our Lord says in effect, This is the blood not of the Paschal Lamb, but of Myself; not of that old Covenant ratified by the blood of bulls and of goats, which could never take away the guilt of sin, but by that blood which is accepted by God as a real expiation, and that not for one favoured people, but for the whole race of mankind. When we consider also, that it was the custom of ancient nations to drink blood, or wine instead of blood, for the ratifying of covenants, we are led to regard this ordinance as more than a mere Commemoration, though we cannot, like the Romanist, regard it as a real Sacrifice. That doctrine is expressly and strongly renounced in the thirty-first Article of our Church, entitled, "Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross," a title which implies that it is not to be repeated on an Altar. It opens with this proposition, taken with some additional words from St. John's first Epistle, (ii. 2.) "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone." Now if this can be established, the sacrifice of the Mass cannot be maintained: for if the death of Christ upon the

cross was a perfect satisfaction for all sin, it would be absurd to argue for another. That such a sacrifice would be offered but once, we might reasonably expect; but, as if it were to protest against this pernicious error of a future age, the continual repetition of this sacrifice, the fact of its taking place but once, is prominently brought forward again and again in the Epistle to the Hebrews: *We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* (x. 10.) *Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice first for His own sins and then for the people, for this He did once when He offered up Himself.* (vii. 27.) *He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.* (ix. 12.) *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.* (ix. 28.) *Every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin; but this Man, after he had offered up one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.* (x. 11, 12.) *Now once at the end of the world He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.* (ix. 26.) St. Peter also writes to the same effect; *Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God.* (1 Ep. iii. 18.) We may therefore adopt the language of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (x. 26.) *that there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.*

The Council of Trent lays down the position, that though Christ was a Priest for ever, He did not mean that earthly Priesthood should cease. Accordingly, the night before He was betrayed He offered up to His heavenly Father His body and blood, under the symbols of bread and wine, and ordained His Apostles Priests, that they and their successors might afterwards offer Him up; though there was to be still but one Priest, the Apostles acting only for their Lord. This appointed Sacrifice was to be a real one no less than the original which it represented, the only difference being that



it was unbloody, and offered in a different manner; for it is declared to be strictly propitiatory, capable of gaining remission of even great sins, and to be offered for the dead as well as the living. The doctrine was first established in the dark ages, yet like other errors it grew gradually, and might originate from the strong and unguarded language of the Fathers, who sometimes called it the unbloody sacrifice; still, however, in their most declamatory sentences, some expression occurs to show that their words were not to be taken literally; for the Christians were reproached by the heathen for professing a religion which had no Sacrifice, and the Fathers in their Apologies allowed that they had none. Thus Justin Martyr<sup>a</sup> says, “that God has no need of blood, libation, or incense, but that the Christian manner was to offer Him prayers and thanksgivings; and that the only way of paying Him suitable honour, was not to consume by fire what He has given us for our sustenance, but to spend it upon ourselves and upon the poor, and to render Him the grateful tribute of our hymns.” “We sacrifice indeed, but it is with pure prayer, as God has commanded,” writes Tertullian, “for God the Creator of the Universe hath no need of any incense or blood<sup>t</sup>.” And again, “the spiritual sacrifices of praise are designed, when it is said, pay thy vows to the Most High; and, in another passage of Scripture, a troubled spirit is declared to be the acceptable sacrifice to God<sup>u</sup>. Celsus had objected to Christians their want of altars; Origen<sup>x</sup> replies, “The objector does not consider, that with us every good man’s mind is his altar, from whence truly and spiritually the perfume of incense is sent up, that is, prayers from a pure conscience.” Dr. Waterland, who from his intimate study of the Fathers is of the highest

<sup>a</sup> Apol. i. p. 19.<sup>t</sup> Ad Scap. ii. 69.<sup>u</sup> Adv. Jud. v. 188.<sup>x</sup> Contra Celsum, p. 755.

authority, declares, that they will all be found constant and uniform in one tenor of doctrine, rejecting all material sensible sacrifices, and admitting none but spiritual ones, as prayers and praises. The whole of the matter, as he says, is well comprised in a sermon of Abp. Sharp; "We offer up our alms; we offer up our prayers, our praises, and ourselves; and all these we offer up in the virtue and consideration of Christ's Sacrifice, represented by way of Commemoration; nor can it be proved that the ancients did more than this: this whole service was their Christian Sacrifice, and this is ours." "We do not deny," continues this Prelate<sup>t</sup>, "that the Communion Office may be called a Sacrifice, nor do we scruple to call this service the Christian Sacrifice by way of eminence, because we find the ancient Fathers frequently so styling it; but then it is only upon these three accounts; first, that we bring our offerings to God for the use of the poor, with which kind of sacrifice St. Paul tells us *God is well pleased*, which alms and oblations made up one great part of that unbloody sacrifice that the Fathers so often speak of; secondly, we offer up our prayers and thanksgivings for ourselves, and our intercessions for the whole Church; and thirdly, to complete the Christian sacrifice, we offer up both with a particular regard to that one sacrifice of Christ which He offered upon the Cross, and which is now represented before our eyes in the symbols of bread and wine. What then do we not offer every day? says Chrysostom. Yes, we offer by making a Commemoration of His death: and we do not make another sacrifice every day, but always the same, or rather a remembrance of that sacrifice. And in the same sense, says Eusebius, we sacrifice a remembrance of the great sacrifice." In these three things consisted the whole of the Christian Sacrifice, as it was held

<sup>t</sup> Vol. vii. Sermon xi.

by the primitive Church, and so we in our Communion-service, having offered up our sacrifice of alms, and our sacrifice of devotion for the rendering these two acceptable, plead before God the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Fathers, accustomed on the one side to the temple service, on the other to heathen sacrifices, were naturally led to adopt metaphorical language, which appears strange and forced to us who know of both only from books. In this they follow Scripture, for St. Paul declares in a metaphor drawn from the Mosaic ritual that he would willingly be *offered* (*poured as a drink offering*) *upon the sacrifice and service of the faith* of his Philippian converts (ii. 17.); and he invites the Roman Christians (xii. 1.) to offer up themselves to God *as a living sacrifice*. Moreover, *praise and good works* are called a *sacrifice* in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 15, 16. xii. 1.); and in Hosea, (xiv. 2.) the *calves*, that is, the offerings, *of the lips* are put for prayer.

The early Church offered not only Alms, but Oblations; and though the practice has ceased, we have introduced into our Communion Service the word, though in a different sense, that is, for the other devotions of the people in addition to their alms. The original oblation was the Bread and Wine contributed by the congregation, of which, after it had been solemnly presented to God, the minister took a part, and by consecration made it, according to the language of that time, the Body and Blood of Christ; which being done, he distributed, so that the people, having offered to God, were by Him feasted at His table with part of their own offerings, as they had been formerly with the peace offerings under the Mosaic dispensation. This was much more strikingly the case when the Lord's Supper was followed by the love-feast. From that custom may be traced the doctrine of a Sacrifice offered in the Sacrament.

The reasoning in the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to

prove, that no sacrifice that is repeated can take away sin; that the one once made was sufficient, and therefore is not to be repeated; and that no man can be a Priest in the room of Christ to repeat the Christian sacrifice. It is evident also, that this doctrine depends upon transubstantiation; and if that has been disproved, then at the utmost, the bread and wine can be no more than the commemoration of a sacrifice. I know only two texts in the Old Testament to which Romanists appeal in proof of the contrary tenet. The first is the Lord's declaration by Malachi, (i. 11.) *that in every place a pure offering shall be offered*; but *Mincha*, the word so rendered here and in other places Meat offering, means an unbloody sacrifice. If, then, it is to be taken literally, it will contradict Transubstantiation; and a *pure offering* [of flour], an unbloody sacrifice, does not answer to the Trent definition that this is propitiatory, for, to use the Apostle's words, *without shedding of blood there is no remission*, (Heb. ix. 22.) and where *remission is, there is no more offering for sin*, (Heb. x. 18.) We conclude therefore, that, like other sacrificial terms so often applied to the Christian service by the Prophets, it is to be taken as a figure for our Commemoration of Christ's death, and deduce from this very passage to which they appeal an additional argument, that "the sacrifices of Masses in which it was commonly said that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, are blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits." (Art. xxxi.) The second passage is the Apostle's reference (Heb. vii.) to the fact, that the King of Salem, who was also Priest of the most high God, brought forth bread and wine to refresh *Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all*. This fact, had it not received an inspired comment, might have appeared to us unimportant. But first, David, in that memorable Psalm, by the opening of which

his *Lord* silenced His own enemies, foretels of Him that He is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec. And long after the Apostle explains how this *King of righteousness* and *King of peace* is a type of the great *High Priest*, who was not a temporary one after the order of Aaron. This passage is even still less favourable to the Roman Catholic doctrine than the first, for the bread and wine were not brought forth as an act of religion, but to refresh Abraham and his followers; and the reasoning shows, that as Christ is a Priest for ever now pleading the merits of His one sacrifice of Himself, and interceding for His people, there is no longer a Victim to be offered; and consequently, since every priest must *have something to offer*, (Heb. viii.) that there are no successors to Christ in the Priesthood, that is, in the Sacrificer's office. While, however, we strenuously maintain that Christ alone can offer up Christ as a Sacrifice, and that His ministers are only authorized to commemorate this Sacrifice offered *once for all*, and not by man but for man, we regard the Eucharist as a federal rite, carrying with it on God's part the force of a contract, that (fit qualification on our part presumed) this symbolical communion shall be as a deed of conveyance instrumentally investing us with the benefits of Christ's death. If we make the Lord's Supper a mere Commemoration, we make it a strange and unintelligible rite; but if we consider it as a Feast upon a Sacrifice, its meaning is easy and simple. When sacrifices were in use, part of the victim was served up at a religious feast, and all who partook of it were understood to partake also of the spiritual benefits of the offering. Now Christ is our victim; on His body we do not literally feast, because it is in heaven; but He appointed bread to represent it; on that we can feast, and so partake of His body: and such bread is the Bread of life, because by His own appointment it represents His flesh. This view, illustrated by Cudworth,

was adopted by Warburton as an effectual answer both to the Roman Catholic system, which exalts the Eucharist into a Sacrifice, and the Socinian, which considers it as no more than a discharge on man's part of a positive duty, throwing out that essential part of a Sacrament which belongs to God, who, according to the Homily (on the Common Prayer and Sacraments), "herein embraces us, and offers Himself to be embraced by us." I apprehend, that in receiving the Eucharist in a right frame of mind, we not only commemorate our Saviour's death, but obtain Remission of our sins, and the gift of sanctifying Grace, by which "God doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him;" and this seems to be acknowledged in the final prayer of our Communion-service; "Thou dost assure us thereby of Thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of Thy Son."

It is a painful consideration, that, notwithstanding the general improvement both in the knowledge and practice of religion, there are still many regular attendants in our churches who rarely or ever partake of "these holy mysteries," which our Master and only Saviour "hath instituted as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort." This systematic neglect of an ordinance so solemnly enjoined must arise from some misconception of its nature, or of the qualifications of a communicant. All know that it was grossly abused by the Corinthians, who perverted this feast into an occasion of intemperance; and many now, without due consideration, apply to themselves the language in which St. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 29.) reproves those unworthy communicants. The lapse of time since the publication of the authorized version, by affecting the meaning of a word he employs, has increased their alarm; for, reading that the Corinthians (1 Cor. xi. 29.)

ate and drank to themselves damnation, they fear lest, by participating, they should incur eternal punishment; though reflection might satisfy them, that damnation was then equivalent to condemnation, and that from the context we must learn to which world it refers. If they would read the whole chapter, they could not fail to observe, that the Apostle was speaking of temporal judgments, for of these who did *not discern the Lord's body, many among them were weak and sickly, and many slept*, (from the use of which term we may conclude that even they had departed in the Lord;) of others he writes, that they are *weak and sickly*, and warns them, that *they are chastened that they should not be condemned with the world*. None can now be guilty of not distinguishing the Lord's body from a common meal; and the fear itself which keeps such away from the Sacrament, is a proof that they would not willingly receive it in an unworthy manner. Their absence is rather to be ascribed to a mistaken humility, which fears that they are not included in the invitation, and that it would be presumption in them to come till they had made themselves worthy. But however specious the form may be that it assumes, it must be a false scruple that keeps them from obeying their Lord's positive command. That degree of holiness, which some consider as an indispensable qualification for this Sacrament, can hardly be attained except by partaking of it, and in obeying our Lord's other commands. The feeblest aspiration after the power of obeying the Divine will, is a sufficient warrant for any to communicate; for we may be assured, that such a desire is excited by the Holy Spirit, in order to draw us to God, and if it be followed, more assistance will be given, so that the weakest and most diffident believer may proceed from strength to strength, in the use of this ordinance, which, he should never forget, is also a Sacrament, that is, "not only a badge of his profession, but an effectual sign of grace, by the which God doth

work invisibly, and doth not only quicken, but strengthen and confirm his faith in Him. So persevering, he will become gradually more and more conformed to the image of Him who instituted it.

126, 127. *The last Discourse of Jesus, in which He comforts His disciples, especially with the promise of the Holy Spirit.*  
*John xiv. xv. xvi.*

What Jesus had already said concerning His departure, could not fail to distress the Apostles: He therefore directed them to the only real source of consolation, reliance upon God<sup>2</sup> and upon Himself. They were looking forward to an earthly kingdom; He therefore said, to comfort them under their disappointment, *In my Father's house are many mansions*; that is, if I understand<sup>a</sup> Him aright, that in the Universe are many worlds besides this, and that He goes to no solitary enjoyment, but to prepare a place for them, which could be done only through His death, and that He would return to conduct them to it. Lest they should distrust the promise, He added, that they know the place. Thomas,

<sup>2</sup> *Ye believe in God, believe also in Me*, is the authorized version of πιστεύετε εἰς Θεὸν καὶ πιστεύετε εἰς ἐμὲ: but Nonnus and the Greek commentators, whose opinion on a grammatical point must have peculiar weight, consider that the verb is in both places in the same mood, and that it should be the imperative seems probable from the 11th verse, πιστεύετε μοι ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ.

<sup>a</sup> The ordinary explanation of the text is, that these *many mansions* are all in heaven, and that as in the parable, the king places one faithful servant over five cities, and another over ten, so of the believers who shall be admitted into Heaven, some will be placed in more glorious abodes than others, in proportion to their good works on earth, though none will have a right or inclination to complain, since they will enjoy all the happiness and render all the service of which they are capable. This is I believe true doctrine; and I should also believe it to be the true interpretation of the passage as if it had been a detached Aphorism, but it appears to me irreconcilable with the context. To the Believer, to whom few opportunities of service have been granted, this is most consolatory; but surely it is not the inferior mansions that are allotted to the Apostles.



still clinging to the notion of the Messiah's visible kingdom, confessed ignorance, and this led Jesus to announce Himself as *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*. And not only did He declare that He is the Way, but that He is so united with the Father in counsel and action, that he who has known the one, may be said to know the other. This declaration perplexed a second disciple, Philip; He therefore confirmed and explained it, by telling him, that he who hath seen Him hath seen the Father. He then spoke of His union with the Father in terms which imply partaking of His Nature; and assured them *that they shall do greater works than He Himself had done*<sup>b</sup>, because He goes to the Father, and that He Himself [consequently the equal of the Father] will grant whatever petitions they put up for the success of His religion. He added to encourage them, that He will pray the Father, and that He will send them another Paraclete, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, but who shall abide with them, not as He Himself had done for a season, but for ever, and that His indwelling influence should be more beneficial to them than His own personal presence. He said, He would not leave them destitute like orphans, but would soon come to them again, and manifest Himself to those who proved their love to Him by keeping His commandments. A third disciple, Judas, showed that their carnal notions of His kingdom prevented them from understanding Him, by asking how He would manifest Himself to them, and not unto the world. He did not reply to them directly, but turned their attention to what it especially

<sup>b</sup> It must, however, never be forgotten, that as their works were wrought through the Spirit which He imparted, they demonstrate the power not of the doer but of the giver. But what can these works be? It is commonly answered, Miracles. The gift of Tongues is, I believe, the only one that had not been exercised by our Lord, and He had no occasion for it, yet it can hardly be considered as greater than raising the dead. The work must, I conceive, mean the effect produced by miracles, their greater success in propagating His Religion.

concerned them to know and believe, that if they loved and would obey Him, both Himself and the Father would love them, and make their abode in them, and that the Holy Spirit would remind them of what He had taught, and would explain what they could not now understand. He then left them the precious Legacy of Peace of mind, which He calls His peace, because it can only be obtained through Him, which He gives not as the world gives, a gift but in name, no better than an ineffectual wish, whereas His is an actual grant; and He subjoined, that if they loved Him, they would rejoice at His departure, because His Father was greater than He; greater, because He had for a season divested Himself of the form of God, and had assumed the infirmities of the flesh, “for us men, and for our salvation.” He continued, that He would no longer converse much with them, for the *Prince of this world was coming*, and would prevail over Him, though *he had nothing in Him*, that is, could find in Him no sinful inclination; for He Himself was ready to yield, because *He loved the Father*, and so the *Father gave Him commandment*.

Jesus now broke off the discourse, by saying, *Arise, let us go hence*. It is, however, immediately resumed, according to some commentators, on the way to the Mount of Olives: but this seems most improbable, when we consider its nature, and the number addressed, and therefore it appears to me that it must have been before they quitted the room, perhaps on leaving the table. He illustrated the union that ought to subsist between Himself and His People, by a comparison which, from its frequent recurrence in the Old Testament, would be familiar to them. The Church had been symbolized in Prophecy (Isaiah v.) by a choice Vine, which, when it degenerated and brought forth wild grapes, was threatened with extirpation. By calling Himself the true Vine, Jesus intimated that it was founded upon Himself, and

warned them that it was to be subject to the same discipline as under the Jewish Dispensation. As the husbandman cuts off every barren branch, and prunes every bearing one that it may produce more and better fruit; so His Father, who is glorified by His people bearing much fruit, will remove the useless members of the Church, and by fatherly chastisements improve the good. The branch that is cut off from the parent stock withers, and so the believer can do nothing who is separated from the Saviour, the Author of his spiritual life. He charged them therefore to abide in Him, and promised that He would abide in them; He exhorted them to continue to possess the love with which He then loved them, by keeping His commandments, especially His new one of mutual love, even to the degree in which He had shown it of dying for one another, and condescended to call them no longer *servants* but *friends*, because He had confidentially communicated to them all that He had heard from His Father. Since they were His, they must expect to suffer from the same hatred which He had Himself experienced from the world, which had *hated Him*, as had been foretold, *without a cause*, and this hatred would proceed to such a length, that their enemies would not only excommunicate them, but consider the putting them to death as an act as acceptable to God as sacrifice. He endeavoured to moderate their grief, by assuring them that His departure would be even advantageous for them, for unless He departed, He could not send unto them the Holy Spirit. And informed them for their consolation, that this other Advocate will, by conferring miraculous powers on them, convince the world of its sin of unbelief in putting Him to death; of His own righteousness, as vindicated by His ascension to His Father; and of Judgment, by His condemnation, as would be proved in the triumph of His religion, and by its inward working upon the heart. *Howbeit*, He continued, *when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you*

*into all the truth.* Our version here, as frequently in other passages, drops the Article, and in none more unfortunately, for it leads the reader to think of truth of various kinds instead of religious truth alone, the only one here named. This promise was preeminently fulfilled to those to whom it was addressed, but the extravagances of enthusiasts of every age, from Montanus to those who are yet living, should not tempt us, as it has many, to limit to Apostles an assurance so encouraging to all; for it is in harmony with a former declaration of the same gracious Lord, *My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.* The following sentence duly weighed would guard it from abuse; since it teaches that no new revelation of doctrine or commandment is to be expected. *He shall not speak of Himself, He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.* The Word of God is the instrument by which the Spirit of God worketh, and it is in order to comprehend the real depths of that word that He opens the understanding. This doctrine has been so happily illustrated by Dr. Chalmers, that I will state it in the language of that eminent Divine, whose loss we have recently been called upon to lament: “He does not tell us any thing that is out of the record; but all that is within it He sends home with clearness and effect upon the mind. He does not make us wise above that which is written; but wise up to that which is written. When a telescope is directed to some distant landscape, it enables us to see what could not otherwise be seen; but it does not enable us to see any thing which has not a real existence in the prospect before us. The natural eye saw nothing but blue land stretching along the distant horizon: by the aid of the glass, there bursts upon it a charming variety of fields and woods, and spires and villages. Yet who would say, that the glass added one feature to this assemblage? It discovers nothing to us which is not there,

nor out of that portion of the book of nature we are employed in contemplating does it bring into view a single character which is not previously inscribed upon it. And so of the Spirit. He does not add a single truth or a single character to the Book of Revelation. He enables the spiritual man, indeed, to see what the natural man cannot see; but the spectacle which he lays open is uniform and immutable. It is the Word of God, which is ever the same; and he, whom the Spirit of God has enabled to look to the Bible with a clear and affecting discernment, sees no phantom passing before him; but, amid all the visionary extravagance with which he is charged, can, for every one article of faith and every one duty of His practice, make His triumphant appeal to the law and to the testimony<sup>c</sup>. This might suffice to comfort them for the loss of their Advocate and Teacher, but the deprivation of instruction was not their only cause of sorrow; the most afflicting one was the approaching departure of their friend. In order, therefore, that they might not be overcome with grief, He joined with His departure an assurance of His return after *a little while*, when their sorrow would be turned into joy, a joy that would be permanent, *for no man should take it from them*. Our Lord allowed that there had been hitherto some obscurity in His discourse, for He added, *These things have I spoken to you in proverbs*. To us, to whom the Crucifixion and Resurrection are past events, His words are clear; but we are apt to forget, that these events had not been anticipated by the Apostles as possible, nor is it on consideration so astonishing, as He called His death His departure, that they should suppose that He spoke not of going out of the world, but to some other country, probably to the Jews of the Dispersion. The termination of the discourse produced the desired effect, and satisfied them; for they said, *Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and we believe that*

<sup>c</sup> Chalmers, Disc. i. p. 33, 34.

*Thou camest forth from God.* To check their growing self-confidence, He forewarned them of their approaching desertion of Him, saying, that though every one of them left Him, He should not even then be really alone, because the Father would be with Him. To sustain and comfort them under their impending trials and sufferings, He said in conclusion, *These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me you might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer,—you have no reason to despond,—I have overcome the world.*

126. *Christ's Prayer for Himself and His People. John xvii.*

Our Saviour closed His consolatory address with a Prayer, which He permitted them to hear. We may perhaps acquire a more intimate knowledge of the feelings of our great High Priest from it, than from any other portion of the sacred volume; and it may be considered as a specimen of the Intercession which He is ever making in heaven for those whom He has constituted His brethren, by taking upon Him their nature.

We have here and in other places a partial view of His Priesthood, which involves truths the most profound and the most consolatory; but a connected and argumentative statement of that office was reserved for the Epistle to the Hebrews. That Exposition of the shadows of the law exhibits to us, under the type of Aaron entering within the veil into the most holy place, this our true Priest converting Heaven itself (of which the earthly sanctuary was but the figure) into a Temple. For as the Levitical priest on the day of Atonement sprinkled the mercy-seat with the blood of the victim which had been slain in the presence of the people in the court without; so this Priest, *after the order of Melchisedec*, whose office as Inter-

cessor is perpetual, having publicly offered upon the altar of the cross His one sacrifice of Himself, now appears continually in His Father's presence to plead the merits of that offering. It was with a reference to this part of the office which He still sustains, that He showed Himself to St. John in Patmos (Rev. i. 13.) in the sacerdotal garment, and afterwards (viii. 3.) as an Angel, mixing with the prayers of all the saints incense, which represents His own Intercession.

The office of a Priest consisted of two parts, Sacrifice and Intercession. Christians are now happily nearly unanimous in acknowledging that their Lord has fulfilled the first part of it, by His expiatory Death. The second is by too many still overlooked: and yet it is the more important, as giving efficacy to the former; for the Sacrifice *then* offered, is *now* applied to believers, and therefore Jesus did not lay aside His priestly functions when He entered into glory, but remains a *Priest for ever*, to lead a mediatorial life in heaven for the benefit of His people. This is their *strong consolation, the anchor of their souls*, (Heb. vi. 18, 20.) through which, though tossed on the stormy sea of life, they still ride secure, since Jesus *their forerunner hath fixed it in that within the veil*; and this expectation encourages and authorizes them *to come boldly with filial confidence to God, as seated upon a throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*. (Heb. iv. 16.) Christ's intercession, to which all He underwent on earth was but preparatory, ought to be ever in our thoughts; for its supreme importance is strongly expressed by the apostle: *Being reconciled by His death, we are saved by His life*, (Rom. v. 10.) *It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us*. (Rom. viii. 34.) And that our High Priest not only intercedes for His Church, but for each individual member of it, appears from St. John's first Epistle, (ii. 1.) *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father,*

*Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the Propitiation for our sins.* The declaration is well qualified to cheer the timid believer with the hope of final Perseverance; for, if He whom the Father heareth always is ever interceding for him, why should he apprehend that the suggestions of his spiritual Enemy, or the fascinations of the World, should cause him to fall away? And let it be carefully observed, that the comfort offered is guarded against any Antinomian abuse; for the sins here spoken of are evidently not wilful deliberate offences, but such negligences as a pious believer may be betrayed into by inadvertence and ignorance, or the force of unexpected temptation. This appears from the context, which shows, that the *any man* of the Apostle, as it is rendered, is not any human being, but, any one of these whom he calls little children, and from the whole tenor of the Epistle, which is addressed to those who evidenced themselves by their conduct, to be *born of God*.

Intercession is an idea so congenial to the understanding and feelings, that as soon as it is stated, we perceive its suitability to our condition; and even those who have not been enlightened by Revelation, have an indistinct indefinite notion of it. Deists who live in a Christian country, retaining what portion they please of the Faith which they abjure, call the scheme, which they have thus formed at will, the Religion of Nature. But to ascertain the real light of Nature, we must refer to the travels of those who have visited barbarous countries, or to the still existing writings of Greece and Rome, which are in this respect of such peculiar value. Instead of the Being described to us as all benevolence, and as, if not indifferent to human concerns, too kind to punish sin, Tradition has handed down universally gods superior to men in power, but rarely in virtue, objects not of love but of fear: and their wrath is to be appeased by acts of painful mortification, and in extraordinary cases by expiatory sacri-



fices of what is most precious in the estimation of their worshippers, not merely with *thousands of rams or with ten thousand of rivers of oil*, but with giving for their transgression their *first-born, the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls*. Even these costly offerings they deem themselves too unworthy to present in person, and seek for a Priest to offer them on their behalf, and to pray for and instead of them; in a word, for a Mediator who will go between them and their gods, and will reconcile and bring to one mind these alienated parties. We learn from the Apostle Paul, (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.) that in the heathen empire in which he lived, there were supposed to be *in heaven and in earth gods many and lords*, that is, mediators *many*; but to us, he adds, *there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him*. The High Priest after the order of Aaron, shadowed forth in His twofold capacity of Sacrificer and Intercessor, (that is, as far as could be done by one who had to offer *first for his own sins*, and who could not continue by reason of death,) *this Minister of the true Tabernacle, this Mediator of a better covenant, who once at the end of the world hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, after which by His own blood He entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption*. His priesthood does not, like that of Aaron, pass on in succession to other individuals, because *He is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life*. *He ever liveth to make intercession*, and therefore *He, and He alone, can save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him, being the new and living way, through Whom alone we have access to His Father*. What sinner is there who would not rejoice and be satisfied with such an Intercessor, who possesses for His office all the power and all the willingness that we can desire or conceive? And what child of Adam has there ever been who has not sinned? How strange it is then, and were it not a fact

continually occurring, it would seem incredible, that on the one hand the proud Deist, relying on his own presumed innocence, should present himself to the holy heart-searching God, without any mediator; and that on the other, there are Christians, who, distrusting the willingness of Him who has promised, that He will not cast out any that come to Him, seek, like the Gentiles, for mediators of their own discovery, angels and departed saints. They forget that the former are incapable of *being touched*, like their and our Lord, experimentally with *our infirmities*, and however excellent, are but our *fellow* servants; and that the latter, being themselves debtors to Grace alone for their own salvation, *cannot redeem a brother's soul, but must leave that alone for ever*. This *humility*, which declines to accept the Saviour's invitation, and goes to inferior mediators for an introduction to His presence, who has promised to be gracious to His people, and when He hears the voice of their cry, to answer; (Isaiah xxx. 18, 19.) may be specious, but we know from an Apostle that it is *false*; for St. Paul warns the Colossians (ii.) not to be *beguiled with enticing words*, and so to be deprived of their reward by worshipping of Angels; and it is remarkable, that this error had been so rooted in that neighbourhood, that it was decreed at the Council of Laodicea, as late as the fourth century, that whoever invoked them had *not kept the Head*, but had forsaken the Son of God, and gone over to idolatry. Nevertheless, the modern Church of Rome maintains, that the Saints ought to be worshipped, and that other believers should flee to them for help and aid, because they now reign together with Christ, and offer up prayers for them. Under the latter clause, direct prayers for temporal and eternal blessings have been, and are addressed to them by the highest authorities in that Church, that is, by those who have been since canonised, and by Popes, including the present; but such prayers are generally kept out of sight in discussions

with Protestants; and they endeavour to turn aside the force of our arguments by asserting, that they only pray to the Saints to pray to our Advocate in heaven for us. *There is one Mediator between God and man*, is so decisive a text, that it requires ingenuity to evade its force. Consequently a nice distinction has been invented between Mediation of Redemption, and Mediation of Intercession. The former, they allow, is the exclusive province of the *Man Christ Jesus*; but they require secondary Mediators to make Him through their merits gracious to ordinary believers, and too many of them, practically as well as in theory, derogate from the glory both of the Son and of the Father, by addressing prayer almost wholly to His departed servants, especially His Virgin Mother. According to the confession of writers of their own communion, some of them feel more attached to the Saints than to their Lord, and put more trust in the intercession of such of them as they have chosen for patrons, than in that of Christ Himself. The lofty titles of the Virgin—Refuge of sinners, Queen, even of Apostles and Angels, and above all Mother of mercy, so called, we are told, because, while the Son kept to Himself the administration of justice, He assigned to her the gracious portion of His power—virtually depose Him, and the request to her to exercise her maternal authority in their behalf, treats His mediation for these less as a favour than as their right. Even this inferior mediation practically supersedes the higher, which He is continually offering to His Father. For without proceeding to the blasphemous excess which would interpose the Virgin or St. Francis as a shield to protect them from the darts of the angry and threatening<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> See Bishop Bull's Vindication of the Church of England, and Corruptions of the Church of Rome, and Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons on the Doctrine of Mediators.

<sup>b</sup> The Book of the Conformities of St. Francis to Jesus Christ, amounting to forty, the composition of a devoted Franciscan Friar, was sanctioned by the

Son of God, the plea that they apply to Saints because they are so merciful, indirectly at least lowers in their estimation the mercy of their compassionate High Priest. To those who are jealous of their Redeemer's honour, and would ascribe their salvation exclusively to Him, no Roman Catholic tenet is more offensive. None happily is more easily confuted, for it is so recent a practice, that Liturgies are extant, in which prayer is offered *for* the Virgin and the Saints, instead of *to* them, as in the present Mass; the very foundation of the doctrine, their reigning with Christ, is removed, if contrary to the decrees of Roman Councils we interpret Scripture with the early writers of the Church, and maintain, that though enjoying greater happiness than we can conceive in the place of departed spirits, they will not till after the day of judgment be admitted into the presence of God in heaven. Even conceding that they enjoy already the beatific vision, it will be impossible to extricate this tenet from the difficulties in which it is involved, for the faculties of the *spirits of just men made perfect* are still limited so that they cannot hear the prayers of their worshippers on earth, except in as far as it pleases God to show it to them (as explained, if we may use that term, by the Schoolmen) in the mirror of the Trinity. Such a theory confutes itself, since it assumes, that before they can mediate with God, He must make known to them for whom and why they are to mediate. Prayer then to such imaginary mediators is useless: but it is worse, it must be sinful; for

Order, at a Chapter meeting at Assisi, A.D. 1399. Their Founder appears therein not only as far superior to all other Saints, but even as the equal of Christ, the efficacy of whose sufferings he has completed by his own. I should not have referred to this undue exaltation of a mortal, if it had been limited to a barbarous age, but the forty points of resemblance were enlarged by a Spanish Franciscan to four thousand: *Prodigiosum naturæ et gratiæ portentum*: Madrid 1631: and the original work was reprinted at Cologne, 1632, and vindicated against the attacks of the Reformers. Even a painter, as recent as Rubens, has represented the Saint as throwing the skirt of his friar's gown over the world, represented as a globe, to protect it from a thunderbolt, hurled from heaven by Jesus! thus transferring His special office to this enthusiast.

*the Lord, whose name is jealous*, will allow no created being to share in any degree the *glory due unto His name* alone. Even St. John (Rev. xii. 8.) for only falling down at the feet of the Angel who had shown him future events, was reproved by him for this act of homage, because he was but *the fellow-servant*, not of the Apostle alone, but of all *them which keep the sayings of that Book*. And are not all angels, asks an Apostle, (Heb. i. 14.) *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?* A mediator must possess some qualification to justify his assuming the office, and this St. Paul proceeds to tell us is possessed by our one Mediator, *who gave Himself a ransom for all*; having found what the Psalmist (xlv.) says, man cannot do for his brother, but must *let alone for ever the redemption of his soul*; and this ransom is His life, a ransom which could be only found by one in whom, not being “naturally engendered of Adam,” as St. John says, there was not sin. (Art. ix. xv.) Thus Christ has by His death purchased His people to to be His peculiar property, and redeemed them out of the power of Satan, by whom they had been led captive. Our Mediator is therefore entitled to be called not only our Saviour and Preserver, but also our Redeemer; and that title has a fuller meaning than is known to many, who are not acquainted with the original language of the Old Testament, in which it is used much oftener than in the New. A Redeemer as equivalent to a Purchaser, is familiar to all: but it is comparatively unknown as answering to the Hebrew *Goel*, which no single word in modern tongues can express, but is rendered in Ruth (iii. 9, 12.) in its primary sense, *a near kinsman*, in Deuteronomy, (xix. 6.) *avenger of blood*, and in Leviticus (xxv. 25.) and in Job, (xix. 25.) *redeemer*. An examination of it would remove one of the chief scruples of enquiring Israelites, and convince them that the Messiah, to whom it preeminently belongs, while *He took on Him the seed of Abraham*, was also the *most*

*high God.* This office was not created, but regulated by the Mosaic Law, and in the important article of revenge restricted, by providing cities in which those who had slain men, might find refuge from this blood avenger. The Goel was the nearest kinsman; and in an early stage of society, when the Law is feeble, its want of power is supplied in many countries by the strength of family attachment. Among the Israelites, we find that the Goel came forward not only as an avenger of the dead, but as the protector and vindicator of the rights and interests of the living; for it was his duty also to redeem the alienated inheritance of a relation, and under certain circumstances, to marry the nearest of kin. Such obligations were acknowledged as early as in the time of Job, (xix. 23—27.) for he claims the eternal God for his near kinsman; *I know, he exclaims, that my Redeemer, or Vindicator, [Goeli] liveth;* and that he means not the Father but the Son is evident, for in faith he looked to that *brother born for adversity*, who would destroy Him who had the power of death, by restoring to men their forfeited lives, whom he should see *for himself with his own eyes in the flesh*, when He should stand *at the latter day upon the earth.* Such a Redeemer undertook the office as the promised Seed of the woman, but the accomplishment of what He undertook, required union with the Deity; and Isaiah (xlvi. 4.) assures us, that Jehovah Sabaoth, that is, *the Lord of Hosts*, meaning the self-existing Creator and Governor of the universe, *is His name.* The declaration of such a hope fully justifies the Patriarch's wish, that it were *graven in the rock for ever*; and indeed it would be an appropriate inscription in any age, over the entrance of the sepulchre of those who fall asleep in the expectation of a blessed resurrection. Our Redeemer, thus entitled to be our Mediator, now in anticipation of His approaching sacrifice, pleaded its merits with His Father, and finished His ministry with an intercession, which, for the encouragement and consolation of all who should hereafter believe in His name, and

who were even then the objects of His solicitude, He graciously uttered aloud.

As the typical High Priest, after the order of Aaron, was required (Levit. xvi. 17.) to offer annual intercession and sacrifice for himself, the priests, and the whole nation; so our real High Priest, on His day of Atonement, performed both parts of His office; interceding and consecrating Himself as the Victim. While He supplicated as the Mediator, *the Man Christ Jesus*, He spoke also with the majesty of *the Son of God*; and though upon the point of meeting a cruel and ignominious death, there is no mention of approaching sufferings; but His thoughts are solely intent upon the great work given Him to do, the Salvation of men. Our High Priest prayed first for Himself, (1—5.) then for His immediate followers, (6—19.) and finally for all who should hereafter believe. His prayer was heard as respected Himself, for the Father straightway glorified Him both in Heaven and on Earth; on Earth, by the prodigies attending His Crucifixion, by the Conversion of the penitent thief, and by the Testimony borne to Him by Pilate and the Centurion: in Heaven, by His Ascension and Exaltation to the Mediatorial Throne, *angels, principalities, and powers being made subject to Him*. And the Son glorified the Father, in magnifying His Law and righteous government, in His own humiliation, and in the glory that followed it. His prayer was also granted for the unanimity and success of His first disciples, and is granted from age to age, more or less abundantly, according to the zeal and exertions of believers of successive generations. *I pray for them*, He added, *I pray not for the world*. He prayed first for Himself, that, as He had glorified His Father upon earth, and finished the work assigned to Him, by making known to as many as had been given Him the doctrine that leadeth to eternal life, that is, the knowledge of the only true God, and of Him whom He had sent, so He would in return glorify Him with the original

glory which He had enjoyed in His immediate presence before the foundation of the world. He then prayed for His Apostles, because they had been given unto Him and had been faithful, that God would preserve them in His name, that is, in the true religion, and protect them from the evil world, which would hate them as they were not of it. As He should be no longer with them, He prayed likewise His Father to sanctify or consecrate them by and for the truth, as He had consecrated Himself for their sake. The term in reference to Himself must mean that He is consecrated to His office, because of increase of moral sanctification, as already perfectly holy, He was incapable. His Intercession is only for His people, but it is not limited to His personal followers; for He proceeded to pray for all who should hereafter through their teaching believe, and His prayer is, that they all may be united into one body by the closest union with His Father and with one another, and be one, even as His Father and He are, that is, in mind, affections, and desires; and this He asked, not for their good alone, but that this edifying spectacle of unanimity and brotherly affection might convince the world that He had come forth from God. He concluded with expressing a desire, that all who had been given to Him might be with Him, that they might behold His glory, and share in it, and in His and His Father's love.

Jesus, in saying, *I pray not for the world*, could not mean that He would never pray for His adversaries, for this would be inconsistent with His own command, *Pray for them that despitefully use you*, (Matt. v. 44.) and His own practice, for it was actually done by Him on the cross; but the nature of the case did not permit Him to pray for the opposers of His religion, in the same sense that He did for His disciples, that is, for their concord and perseverance, though He indirectly prayed for them in praying for the success of His Apostles. The main object too of His prayer is for His



disciples, not so much as *individuals*, as *apostles*: not so much for their personal benefit, as for the propagation through them of the Truth.

The subject of this prayer, the Unity of Christians, and the reason assigned for it, the Conversion of the world, casts the strongest light on the guilt of Schism. It ought consequently to be considered with self-examination and with supplication for guidance into the whole Truth, by all who separate from any branch of Christ's Catholic and Apostolic Church, since separation can only be justified by the departure of that Church, as in the instance of the Roman, from some essential article of Faith. It ought likewise to warn the Authorities of any Church not to press as indispensable any article of minor importance, lest they should thereby keep from union with them, some that love, no less than themselves, our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Happily, all who intelligently believe *in the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent*, can conscientiously unite in the confessions, prayers, and thanksgivings of our own Reformed Branch of it, and repeat the ancient Creeds which we retain, because "they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." (Art. viii.) Christianity is here defined by Him who is the Author of it to consist in the knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent; that is, that Jehovah is the true God in opposition to the gods many of the Gentiles, and that Jesus is the Apostle of God, the true Christ in opposition to the false Christs who would lay claim to the office. He revealed the only true God, not as He is in nature dwelling in unapproachable light, but in His moral character as holy and just as well as merciful, and as such devising and decreeing man's salvation, and Himself as the Lord sent into the world to accomplish it. Such knowledge is eternal life, for it will be practical, and lead to the due worship of the Son as well as of the Father.

129. *Our Saviour's Agony.* *Matt.* xxvi. 30—46. *Mark* xiv. 40.  
*Luke* xxii 43—45. *John* xviii. 1.

THE ministry of Jesus was now finished. For three years He had publicly condemned sin, while he encouraged the penitent sinner. He had taught Morality and Religion in the Synagogue and in the Temple, and had attested by signs of every description the reality of His Mission and the truth of His doctrine. His ministry finished, He had instituted a Memorial of His death for the benefit of his people; and comforted, instructed, and prayed for His Apostles, and all who should hereafter believe in Him. All that now remained for Him was to pray for Himself, and that He might do this without interruption, He now led out the Eleven over the winter torrent Cedron to Gethsemane, a hamlet between the town and the Mount of Olives, and entered with them into a garden which they were accustomed to frequent, so that Judas would know where to find Him. Here He intended to wait for *the son of perdition*, and to prepare Himself for His approaching sufferings by Prayer. Leaving the others at the entrance, He took with Him, to witness His distress of mind, only the three who had been favoured with a sight of His glory on the mountain of Transfiguration, and withdrew about a stone's throw even from them. This Agony or struggle of mind, between the sense of Divine abandonment and the desire of enduring it for Man's sake, is one of the profound mysteries that we are unable to comprehend: and this is well acknowledged by the Greek Church, which, pleading with the Saviour His own merits, conjures Him to aid His worshippers among other appeals by His incomprehensible Agony. We also in our Litany conjure this "Good Lord," to have mercy upon us "by His agony and bloody sweat;" and one reason of His enduring it seems intimated by

the Apostle, that from His sufferings on this and other occasions, we might have assurance that He is *touched with the feelings of our infirmities*. Incomprehensible, as in some respects, this agony must continue to us, it will, notwithstanding, be profitable to meditate upon it with the light which the word of God affords. Many of His followers in different ages have encountered the severest sufferings, and even the most cruel death, in His cause, not merely with composure, but with peace and joy; and no one will presume to draw a comparison of excellence between the Saviour and the very best of His followers. We must consequently conclude, that there were some bitter ingredients mixed in His cup which were not in theirs, and some cordial infused into theirs which was denied to Him. And yet from His mental agony, we must exclude the two that it should seem would cause the severest pangs—Remorse and Despair. We are told, in the memorable prophecy of Isaiah, (liii. 10.) that *it pleased the Lord to bruise Him*: and this seems to suggest the real explanation of the difficulty. The support of the Holy Spirit purchased by His sufferings for His people, was withheld from Himself. His human nature, though enabled by its union with the Deity to endure His inconceivable anguish without sinking under it, was left destitute of all consolatory communication. He must have had the clearest perception how *exceeding sinful was sin*, and what expiation it required; and He must have felt more exquisitely than any inferior being, the hiding of God's countenance, in whose favour alone there can be happiness or even tranquillity for a soul that is able to appreciate it. Without presuming to speculate farther, we may be sure that the Saviour underwent as much misery as was compatible with a pure conscience, perfect virtue, and the knowledge that His sufferings would terminate in a complete victory over the spiritual enemy; and we may affirm with truth, that there *never was a sorrow like unto*

*His sorrow.* (Lam. i. 12.) This mysterious narrative shows that human nature, even in its perfect state, is averse from suffering; and we learn from it, that we may innocently pray to be delivered from calamities, provided we are disposed to bear them patiently, if God's better wisdom should assign them to us. *He suffered*, says the Apostle to the Hebrews, (ii. 18.) *being tempted*; nor does it seem improbable that the great enemy of man, after having been foiled in His seductive trials in the wilderness, might now have assaulted our Saviour with terrific temptations, in the hope of deterring Him from the work which He had undertaken. Jesus appears in the garden as preeminently *the Man of sorrows*. *His soul was full of heaviness, and disquieted within Him*; and the language of the Psalmist was now verified in Him, *the snares of death compassed Me round about, and the pains of hell gat hold upon Me*. He is described as *sore amazed and very heavy* (ἀδρημονέιν); that is, perplexed and without resource. *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*; and so violent was the conflict, that *there appeared unto Him an Angel from heaven strengthening Him*; and from this we may perhaps infer, that He was now exposed, not as before to the allurements, but to the *fiery darts of the wicked one*. His agony produced a bloody sweat, and that in the open air, and in a night so unusually cold, that others needed a fire to warm them. (John xviii. 18.) The expression is explained by some of the size, not of the nature, of the drops<sup>c</sup>; yet there is no physical reason why we should not take it literally, for bloody sweats have been recorded by physicians and historians<sup>d</sup>. Jesus prayed three times that this cup might pass from Him, but still with the

<sup>c</sup> On account of the particle, *ὡσεὶ*, *as it were*, used also of the Dove at His baptism. St. Luke iii. 32.

<sup>d</sup> The possibility of it is proved by the fatal disease of Charles the Ninth of France, who was even bathed in his own blood, which oozed out of the pores of his skin. Wraxall's History of the Kings of the Race of Valois, vol. ii. p. 278.

reservation, *if it were possible*; and concluded each time with perfect resignation, *Not My will, but Thine be done*. What was this Cup? In the opinion of most, the painful and ignominious death He was about to undergo; but others say, the agony now endured: and this seems to be more in harmony with the Messiah's character and office, for He had before said, that for this very purpose He had come to this hour; and it appears to be confirmed by the Apostle's declaration, (Heb. v. 7.) that *He was heard* on account of His piety, or delivered from what *He feared*; for He was delivered not from dying, but from the distress of mind, which dictated to Him, *in the days of His flesh, prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears*. And when He rose up from prayer, He became calm and composed under His sufferings, going forward to meet the danger that approached with entire self-possession. *Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that delivers Me up*. After this agony was over, remonstrating against Peter's interference to rescue Him from the guard, He said, *The cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?* meaning then by *the cup*, as appears from the context, His being lifted up upon the Cross. His composure never again left Him, as appears from the minute accounts of His Trial and Crucifixion, unless it were the exclamation on the Cross; but that seems to be intended as a citation, to direct the by-standers to the many predictions in that Psalm, and to express at the utmost not His own feelings, but only the fact that He was forsaken.

Great as His sorrow was, it did not absorb Him, for He enjoined three of the disciples, and Peter by name, who instead of watching had fallen asleep, to pray also for themselves, telling them that prayer and watchfulness were the best preservative from temptation. *The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak*; not saying this to excuse the past, but to warn them for the future, that this neglect of duty would

leave them defenceless in the hour of temptation, and that they would fall, notwithstanding their wish and determination to stand. Peter's self-confidence, almost immediately after, induced him, notwithstanding this warning, to enter into temptation, by going into the court of the high priest's palace, and so made way for his fall. Twice did Christ find His Apostles asleep, and this, though the hour might be late, it is difficult to understand: St. Luke says, *they were sleeping for sorrow*.

130. *Jesus is delivered up by Judas. Matt. xxvi. 47—54. Mark xiv. 41—52. Luke xxii. 48—53. John xviii. 4—16.*

Jesus, after He had finished His acts of devotion, told them that the hour of His arrest was at hand, and that their opportunity of watching and praying had been lost. While yet speaking, Judas entered with a multitude, armed with swords and *clubs*<sup>†</sup>, being chiefly the servants of the chief priests, and with them a detachment of Roman soldiers. He was not seized by force, but voluntarily surrendered Himself, asking of His own accord whom they sought, and stipulating that His disciples should be permitted to retire without molestation. He was obliged to repeat His enquiry, and they do not seem to have ventured to approach Him, till the *son of perdition* gave them the preconcerted sign, and betrayed his Master with a kiss. The majesty of His appearance so overawed them, that when He replied, *I am He*, they not only drew back, but fell to the ground; attempting no violence against the eleven, not even against Peter, though he had, without waiting for leave, drawn his sword, and cut off the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant, who probably had come prominently forward. Jesus, showing at once His prudence

<sup>†</sup> ξύλων, not ῥάβδων, *staves*, A. T.

and composure, and acting upon His own maxim of doing good to His enemies, asked the guard to suffer Him to approach the sufferer. He then touched and miraculously restored the servant's ear, protesting at the same time against His disciples resisting the magistrate or his officers; for so we must limit the prohibition of using the sword. He told Peter, that He needed not his feeble arm to rescue Him, for if He chose to decline His voluntary sufferings, and yield to the temptation, He might have commanded instead of twelve men, the service of twelve legions of Angels; of more, we may say, than seventy thousand beings that *excel in strength*, who would readily "speed to do His bidding:" one of whom would have been irresistible by mortals. The Eleven took to flight, no attempt being made to detain any of them; so that, as St. John reminds us, our Saviour's late declaration in His prayer was literally accomplished, *Of those which Thou gavest Me, I have lost none.*

Mark alone informs us, that a young man (*νεανίσκος*) followed, clothed only with a linen wrapper, who perhaps had been roused from sleep, and that the soldiers (*νεανισκοί*) laying hold of him, he left it in their hands, and escaped. One tradition reports him to have been St. John, or another Apostle; but they had all fled before. Some conjecture that he was the owner of the garden, or the master of the house where they had eaten the passover. The Greek noun in a secondary sense, had obtained the meaning of persons that served; thus it is applied to the young men who carried Sapphira to her grave, (Acts v. 11.) and was frequently used of soldiers. At all events, we may presume that he was a disciple; Townson conjectures that it was the Evangelist himself, which affords the most probable reason for his recording the incident.

131. *Jesus is brought before Annas, who sends Him immediately to Caiaphas, the High Priest. Peter, as foretold, denies His Master thrice. Matt. xxvi. 58—75. Mark xiv. 66—75. Luke xxii. 59—61. John xviii. 17.*

Jesus, being bound at the Traitor's suggestion, for fear He should escape, is taken in the first instance to the house of Annas, who had been himself high priest for fourteen years, but had been deposed about nine by the Romans. Such was his influence, that notwithstanding he had been so long displaced, he was consulted as to their future proceedings; nor will this surprise us, when informed that he had been succeeded in order by no less than five of his sons, and several of his sons-in-law, one of whom, Joseph, surnamed Caiaphas, now held the office. The scheme of apprehending our Lord seems to have originated with him: certainly he had recommended to the Council the putting Him to death as expedient. St. John records his speech on that occasion, in part it may be to show that the judge was predetermined to condemn the prisoner, as he stated for the benefit of the nation. Annas, without examining Jesus, sent Him, bound as He was, to this High Priest his son-in-law. Peter and another disciple, thought to be John, recovering from their panic, followed afar off; and, as the latter was known to the high priest, they obtained admission into the court, from which they might see what was going on in the open council-room above. This was another false step, for, by striking Malchus, Peter had rendered himself more obnoxious than the rest; and as he had not courage to own his Master, he ought not to have rushed into this temptation. The young woman who kept the door, seeing Peter warming himself at the fire, challenged him with being a follower of Jesus; and the



dread of detection, especially as he had heard his Master interrogated respecting His disciples, made him break his resolution and promise. He denied Him, and went out into the porch, in order to escape notice; and here the first crowing of the cock reminded him of his Master's prediction. Still, however, fear prevailed; he a second time denied Him, to the same and to others<sup>g</sup>; and when, about an hour after, a relation of Malchus declared that he had seen him in the garden, and the by-standers observed, that his Galilean pronunciation confirmed the charge, he denied with an oath, cursing himself if he had any knowledge of Jesus, adding perjury to a falsehood. Immediately, while he was yet speaking, the cock crew again, and Jesus turning round, looked upon Peter. This look softened his heart, and brought him to a godly sorrow, so that thinking upon his Lord's prediction of his fall, he wept bitterly<sup>h</sup>. The fact is recorded by all the Evangelists, and the time of these denials was the space of the third Roman watch, or from midnight to three o'clock in the morning, which was called the cock-crowing. John, we may presume, remained; and thus it was arranged by Divine Providence, that one of our Lord's biographers should be an eyewitness of His trial before the Council.

<sup>g</sup> According to Matthew, he was asked the second time by another maid. Mark's phrase is *ἡ παιδίσκη ἰδοῦσα αὐτὸν πάλιν*, which our translators render "a maid saw him again," as if it had been *τις*, a sense which, according to Grotius, the words may bear. But though Peter only denied thrice, he might be questioned oftener; and it seems better to translate *ἡ παιδίσκη*, the maid, that is, the one that kept the door, and to suppose with Matthew that there was another; and with Luke, a man, *ἕτερος*, and with John, several, *ἕτεροι*, who interrogate him the second time.

<sup>h</sup> *He rushed out.* Beza.

*Throwing his garment over his head.* Macknight.

He began to weep. Vulg. Syr.

He continued to weep. Simon Leclerk.

Such are the various ways of translating *Ἐπιβαλὼν*, but that of our Version is probably the best.

132. *Jesus, on His Trial, adjured by the High Priest, acknowledges Himself to be the Messiah, and is condemned as guilty of death. Matt. xxvi. 63—75. Mark xiv. 53—65. Luke xxii. 60—70. John xviii. 19—31.*

It was not till day-break that the Council and the witnesses could be brought together to the palace, and in the interval the high priest examined Jesus concerning His disciples and His doctrine, hoping to be enabled to condemn Him out of His own mouth. He objected to this unjust mode of examination, and replied, that He had ever spoken openly to the world in the synagogue and in the temple, and desired him to interrogate those that had heard Him. The answer was thought disrespectful, and one of the officers that stood by smote Him with the palm of his hand. He expostulated, meekly replying, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?* thus becoming an example of His own precept, (Matt. v. 44.) to bear with patience a sudden and unprovoked injury; an example imitated by few of His followers, and remarkably contrasted by St. Paul's reproof of the high priest, under a similar trial.

Wishing to preserve the semblance of justice, the Council being assembled sought out witnesses to charge Him with a capital crime; but though many were produced, none could be found whose accusations were consistent; and in order to condemn a person to death, their own Law required two. It was also necessary to produce such evidence as would satisfy the Roman governor. At last two came, and all that these could advance was a perversion of His words, when He purified the Temple at the commencement of His ministry. No charge could be brought forward for the three following years, though He had constantly taught in public, and even these witnesses did not agree in their story. The high priest then questioned Jesus, hoping He might say something that would condemn Himself; but He

only answered, *If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask [your opinion of Me], you will not answer Me, nor let Me go.* The high priest, every other hope of criminating Him being frustrated, then adjured Him by the living God; and being thus put upon His oath, according to the manner of that tribunal, He felt Himself bound to break His silence, and acknowledge that He was the Messiah. His answer in our translation is ambiguous. Matthew records it thus, *Thou<sup>h</sup>ast said.* Luke, *Ye say that I am.* But the ambiguity in the latter arises from the translation of the question to which He replied, *Art Thou then the Son of God?* which ought to have been rendered, *Thou art then the Son of God?* Mark gives it without any circumlocution, *I am*, and no doubt could have been entertained of His meaning, for He proceeded to assure His judges, that what He affirmed was true, and that they themselves should in due time have proof of it, referring them to the fulfilment of two prophecies, one of David, (Ps. cx. 1.) the other of Daniel, (vii. 13, 14.) both of which they themselves applied to the Messiah. *Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God*, as described by the first; ye shall see the sign ye have so often demanded, foretold by the second, *the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven.* This declaration was exactly what they sought; and it having been decided, that Jesus was by His own reply guilty of Blasphemy, (a capital offence,) they condemned Him to death, observing that there was no further need of witnesses, since they had the prisoner's own confession. As soon as it was fully light (perhaps about four o'clock) they took Him to the Roman Governor, without whose consent they had no power, it seems, to enforce their sentence. First, however, did they, that is, some of the council as well as the attendants, spit in His face, buffet and mock Him, blindfolding His eyes, and saying, *Divine, thou Christ, who it is that smote*

*Thee?* while others struck Him with their fists, or with the palms of their hands. Thus they fulfilled unconsciously predictions, the literal accomplishment of which, in a person of such dignity as the Messiah, seemed impossible. But

*He was wounded for our transgressions,*

*He was bruised for our iniquities.* (Is. liii. 5.)

*His visage was so marred, more than any man,*

*And His form more than the sons of men.* (lii. 14.)

*I gave My back to the smiters,*

*And My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair;*

*I hid not My face from shame and spitting.* (li. 6.)

*He was oppressed and He was afflicted,*

*Yet He opened not His mouth.* (liii. 7.)

The minutest circumstances of this trial, and they too improbable to have been expected, have been so graphically delineated by the Psalmist and the Prophet centuries before they took place, that they have the appearance of being the history of the past, rather than the prediction of the future. In like manner the substance of the annals of the Greek kings of Syria and Egypt had been so clearly revealed by Daniel long before the Macedonian conquest of the East, that Porphyry maintained that the Book bearing his name was a forgery of one who lived after the events foretold. His theory, plausible as it might seem to the uninformed, was confuted by the simple fact, that the original work of Daniel might be seen in the synagogues, and that the Greek translations of it was in circulation before the birth of most of those kings. To any similar objector of modern times we may give the same unanswerable reply, with this addition, that these Predictions, incorporated into the Jewish worship long before Christ, have been ever since His death preserved with care and reverence by the nation wherever dispersed, which, in its unconverted state, is of necessity the antagonist of Christianity, and from whose strained interpretation of

them we may fairly conclude, that it would have been better pleased if they had never been recorded. The remark equally applies to the particulars which accompanied the Crucifixion of this rejected *Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews*, the Lord of David, as well as His Son and Heir after the flesh. Thus some of the following passages have been referred to Christ by the Evangelists, and their narratives enable us to apply to Him the rest. They begin with,

*He was numbered among the transgressors.* (Is. liii. 12.)

*We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* (4.)

*He was cut off out of the land of the living.* (8.)

They proceed to,

*I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint.*

(Ps. xxii. 14.)

*My strength is dried up like a potsherd,* (15.)

*And My tongue cleaveth to My gums.*

*And Thou hast brought Me into the dust of death;*

*For dogs have compassed Me.* (16.)

*The assembly of the wicked have inclosed Me.*

*They pierced My hands and My feet :*

*They part My garments (cloak) among them,* (17.)

*And cast lots upon My vesture [coat].* (Ps. lxix. 20.)

*Thy rebuke hath broken My heart.*

*I looked for some to have pity on Me,*

*But there was no man.*

*They gave Me also gall for My meat,* (21.)

*And in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink.*

And these citations terminate with the opening of the twenty-second Psalm, from which I have transcribed so many verses,

*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

And with His last words,

*Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit,*

which the Psalmist himself thus concludes, (xxxix.)

*Thou hast redeemed Me, O Lord God of Truth.*

Such a coincidence between prophecy and its fulfilment, which the Providence of the Deity alone could have effected, ought to silence and convince the sceptic; and it is yet more amazing when we consider, that several of these verses could only have been fulfilled through the cooperation of enemies. Such enemies, however, as *the chief priests, with the scribes and elders*, could not have been ignorant of the words which the Psalmist had as it were prepared for them a thousand years before.

*All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn:*

*They shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying,*

*He trusted in God that He would deliver Him,*

*Let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him.*

They seem to have used them to heighten their mockery of His claiming the office of Messiah; but however this may be, God's Providence without interfering with their free agency overruled their malice to the literal fulfilment of His Word. This predicted history of our Redeemer not only extends beyond His death,

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous,*

*But the Lord delivereth Him out of all.*

*He keepeth all His bones, not one of them is broken.*

(Ps. xxxiv. 19, 20.)

*Because He had done no violence,*

*He was with the rich in His death. (Is. liii. 9.)*

*They shall look on Me (Jehovah) whom they have pierced.*

(Zech. xii. 10.)

It reaches to His interment,

*Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell,*

*Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy One to see corruption.*

(Ps. xvi. 10.)

and even to His glorious resurrection from the grave, and triumphant ascension into heaven,

*Thou hast ascended on high,*

*Thou hast led captivity captive,  
Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also,  
That the Lord God might dwell among them.* (Ps. lxxviii. 18.)

Thus was the Judge of the world placed at the bar of His own creatures, falsely accused, unjustly condemned, and barbarously insulted. Yet, because it was agreeable to the end of His coming, He patiently submitted.

133. *Jesus is brought before Pontius Pilate the Governor.*

*Matt. xxvii. Mark xv. Luke xxiii. John xviii.*

Jesus having been rejected, and even condemned as a Blasphemer, the whole Council, to give the greater weight to their accusation, brought Him bound to Pontius Pilatus the Procurator or Governor, subordinate to the Legate of Syria. They had no scruple in seeking the death-warrant of an innocent person at an holy season, yet they would not pollute themselves by entering the palace of an heathen, as such pollution would prevent their eating the Passover that evening. Pilate therefore came out to them on a contiguous platform, called in their language, from its elevation, Gabbatha, and in Greek, from its mosaic tessellated flooring, *Διόστρωτον*, the Pavement.

It was very early, yet the Governor, who was no doubt aware of their proceedings, was ready to receive them. He had been in his office six years, and though he had never seen Jesus, who seems not to have visited Cæsarea, the seat of Government, he could not have failed to have heard of His teaching and His miracles. He wished to decline interfering with one whom he could not see brought before him for judgment without uneasiness; and his manner must have betrayed his reluctance, for to his reasonable question, *What accusation bring ye against this Man?* they answered apparently in anger, *If He were not a malefactor, we would not have*

*delivered Him up unto thee. Take ye Him, and judge Him according to your law*, was Pilate's reply; and it intimated that the crime with which He was charged was not a capital one. This they indirectly contradicted by saying, *It is not lawful for us to put any man to death*; thus unwittingly bringing about our Lord's own prediction, that He should die not by Stoning, the Jewish mode of inflicting capital punishment, but by Crucifixion, the Roman; a fact which manifested to the whole empire that the Shiloh, to whom the sovereignty belonged, had been already sent, and that the Sceptre and the Lawgiver had departed from Judah. Meanwhile, *as a sheep before her shearers is dumb*, so the true King of Israel *opened not His mouth*, to the Governor's amazement. His enemies, knowing that Pilate would disregard the charge of Blasphemy, *as certain questions against Him of their own superstition*, accused Him of Treason against His master. *We found Him perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King*. Pilate could refuse no longer with safety to himself. He accordingly interrogated Jesus, saying, *Thou art the King of the Jews?* Jesus then being thus called upon, judicially acknowledged that he had spoken true, but enquired first whether he had enquired of his own accord, or the question had been suggested to him by others. "The question might either have arisen from a dawning conviction of the truth, like that of Nicodemus; or it might be only an official inquiry, to learn, from the prisoner Himself, whether the accusation of the elders were just. Our Lord's reply is to ascertain, from Pilate's own lips, the motive of the question. *Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me?* Is it from a sincere doubt in your own mind, the fruit of My miracles, or only as a magistrate, to ascertain My guilt or innocence, that you make this inquiry? As afterwards, when St. Paul



at Corinth, (Acts xviii.) was brought before the judgment seat, and the Proconsul Gallio refused to judge *of words and names, and of the Law*, so now the answer of Pilate disclaimed every thing beyond a judicial purpose. *Am I a Jew? Thine own people and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me: what hast Thou done?* Do you think that I, a Roman Governor, trouble myself with questions of Jewish superstitions, or have any thought of becoming Thy disciple? The chief priests charge Thee with stirring up the people against Cæsar. I wish only to know whether You have really set Yourself up for a king. *What hast Thou done?* Are you really guilty, or what have You done to give colour to their accusation? The question of Pilate, it is clear, is that of a magistrate. Our Lord makes answer accordingly, and without either denying, or openly asserting that He is King of the Jews, clears Himself from the charge of stirring up the people to violence and sedition. *My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants have fought, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My Kingdom not from hence.* The Kingdom which I claim does not derive its origin from human policy, or depend for its attainment on the efforts of a party, or the weapons employed by ambitious men. It is the direct gift of My heavenly Father, and assured to Me by His promise. If it were to be secured by seditious measures, My disciples would have fought against the Jews, when they came to take Me prisoner by violence. But since I taught them to offer no resistance, and yielded Myself at once to My enemies, it is therefore clear that the Kingdom which I look for has a higher source, and involves no seditious violence<sup>a</sup>."

Jesus, in explanation of the Sovereignty which He claimed,

<sup>a</sup> For this and the next quotation I am indebted to Mr. Birk's able Work, entitled, "The Christian State, or the first Principles of National Religion."

added, that it was not from or out of this world, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. All then are mistaken, who, treating His Government like the Jewish Theocracy, would either merge the Church in the State, or the State in the Church. The Romanist professes that Christ now reigns on earth through His visible Vicegerent, who is directly supreme in all ecclesiastical causes, and paramount over things temporal, whenever they are connected with those that are spiritual. The enthusiastic Anabaptists of Germany, and the Fifth-Monarchy-men of England, while they denounced the Pope, came to the same conclusion, for maintaining that dominion was founded upon grace, they inferred that their Lord's sovereignty, till His return, ought to be administered by His true servants the saints, that is, by themselves. Disgusted with the pretensions of both, too many in modern times run into the opposite extreme, resolving the sovereignty of Christ into a mere spiritual preeminence, and virtually, though unintentionally, dethroning Him. Their theory unhappily derives support from the authorized version of our Lord's reply, *My kingdom is not of this world*. *Of* has a double meaning, but there is no ambiguity in 'Εκ, for which it stands; and a reference to the original shows that the text is wrested from its meaning, when brought in proof that Christ is not Sovereign of the world. In what proportion His Sovereignty should be divided between the Clergy and the Laity, has been frequently disputed; but it is strange that any Christian should deny that He is a Sovereign, since, in sending forth His Apostles to *teach all nations*, He encouraged them with this declaration, *All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth*. Surely it ought not to surprise us, that He to whom *the powers and authorities of heaven have been made subject*, should also reign over the race whose nature He has united with His own; and as in reward of His obedience unto death His Father hath put all things under His feet, how can believers con-

sistently refuse to do Him national homage, when all beings, including expressly those on earth, are required to bow the knee at the name of Jesus. St. John, when *in the Spirit on the Lord's day*, (Rev. v. 12, 13.) heard, *Blessing and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever*, from every created intellect, *ascribed to the Lamb that had been slain*; and he afterwards describes Jesus as a Conqueror, *ruling the nations with a rod of iron*, (xix. 11—16.) under the title of *King of kings, and Lord of lords*. Write, said He to the Apostle (iii. 21.) in this vision, to the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, that *I am set down with My Father on His throne*; and the whole scope of the Bible, and many express texts, show that our Poet might justly thus apostrophise Him :

Come then, and added to thy many crowns,  
 Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth;  
 Thou who alone art worthy! It was thine  
 By ancient covenant ere Nature's birth;  
 And Thou hast made it Thine by purchase since.

*Cowper's Task*, vi. 856.

A misconception of the Saviour's claims upon His people, and their unhappy division into sects under various denominations, who worship apart from one another, render at present popular the opinion, that Religion is exclusively a private concern between each man and his Creator, and that though we are all bound to obey the Lord Jesus Christ as individuals, His authority is not to be recognised by the Legislature or the Government. History has proved that the visible Church of Christ can exist under an unbelieving Ruler; yet every really Christian Prince will feel it his duty to regulate his public as well as his private life according to the Bible, and to provide the means for the maintenance of Christian worship. With the solitary modern exception of the United States of America, Christianity is

established in every Christian country. The example of Constantine was followed by the Barbarians, as soon as they were converted ; in all the kingdoms into which the Western Empire was broken up, the Nation was divided into the three Estates, of Clergy, Nobles, and Commons ; and our own most eminent Jurists agree in maintaining, that Christianity is the basis of the British Constitution. The text, properly understood, while it is a declaration of Christ's kingdom, is at the same time a definition of its nature, showing that it was not to be enlarged, like earthly sovereignties, by the sword, or maintained by pains and penalties. "The refutation of the charge of treason was complete, and convinced Pilate that Jesus was innocent. Still he could not forbear to ask the meaning of His mysterious answer, but said unto Him, *Thou art then a King ?* The reply of our Lord is a distinct confession of the great truth. *Thou sayest I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one who is of the truth heareth My voice.* As if He had said, Your very question, addressed to a prisoner whose life is in your hands, proves a secret voice in your conscience, which tells you that I am One higher and nobler than My outward appearance would lead you to suppose. My words and actions, you must secretly feel, are those of a King Who has veiled His true glory, or you would have no cause to make this enquiry. However scorers may deride the confession in a prisoner on the eve of a shameful death, I do avow myself to be really a King. For I came into the world for this very purpose, to announce, amidst scorn and mockery, that Kingdom which My Father has given Me, and to call sinners to repent and prepare for the day when it shall be fully revealed. This great truth,—the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,—has been the substance of my message ; and every one who loves the truth, will obey

the warning, and, while he prepares for that Kingdom of Righteousness, will own Me also for the eternal King. Such, very plainly, is the true meaning of this answer of our Lord; and in this manner it is afterwards explained by the Apostle himself, (1 Tim. vi. 13—15.) when he speaks of this *good confession*, and teaches us that it relates to the *appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which His Father, the blessed and only Potentate, in His times shall show*.

“Such an answer, however, was beyond the narrow field of Pilate’s vision, and he turned away from this glorious confession with an air of contemptuous unconcern. *Pilate saith unto Him, What is Truth?* But though careless about these higher claims, he was well persuaded that the charge of sedition was groundless. He looked on the prisoner, apparently, as an enthusiast, but one whose enthusiasm was quite harmless; for *when he had said this, he went out, and said unto the Jews, I find in Him no fault*. He cared nothing about this Utopian kingdom which was to come down from heaven. It was enough that he was satisfied there had been no actual sedition against the Emperor of Rome. But still a deeper impression, though kept down by the pride of a worldly heart, could not be entirely stifled; and when he heard presently the real charge of the Jews, *By our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God*, the fear of surrendering an innocent victim to the popular hatred, is aggravated by an awe, which he could no longer conceal, arising out of the mysterious dignity of this Man of sorrows, and those beams of Divine Majesty which shone out amidst His patient suffering.”

It is remarkable, that this acknowledgment of Sovereignty did not produce upon the Governor the effect that was expected. The philosophy of the Stoics was then so popular at Rome, that it could not have been wholly unknown to any who had received a liberal education. They

had proudly portrayed an imaginary sage, their model of ideal perfection which they aspired to realise, as inferior to Jupiter only as being a mortal, in other respects as his equal, or rather superior, as the god was described to be wise by nature, the sage by choice. Horace had already in jest summed up his perfections, with the title of King of kings: (Ep. i. 107.) and Pilate having, we may suppose, some notion of these lofty pretensions, might have regarded the King of Israel as a visionary, but harmless, self-styled Sovereign. *Every one*, said our Lord in conclusion, *who is of the truth, heareth My voice*. Pilate proved that he was not; for though he asked, *What is Truth?* he would not stay for an answer. The question may be explained in several ways: but it seems to me most natural to suppose, that he meant to say, this is no season for entering upon a philosophical discussion, I have now to consider the means of saving thy life; for he immediately went out upon the pavement, and publicly declared, that he found no cause to condemn Him. They, exasperated, cried out, *He stirreth up the people to rebellion, beginning from Galilee, to this place*. Pilate then questioned Him again, but having made His *good confession*, He gave the Governor no answer.

134. *Pilate, being informed that Jesus is a Galilean, sends Him to Herod. Luke xxiii. 6—12.*

The mention of Galilee, however, suggested an expedient, by which he hoped, without offending His accusers, to avoid condemning a person whom he believed to be innocent. Finding on enquiry that Jesus was called a Galilean, he sent Him to Herod, the sovereign of that district, whom the passover had brought to Jerusalem. Herod had long desired to see one of whom he had heard such extraordinary reports, and whom he suspected to be the Baptist risen from the grave. He was therefore at first exceedingly glad;

but as Jesus performed no miracle to gratify him, nor even answered any of his questions, he was disappointed, and despised Him. Still, though the priests had followed and urged to Herod, as a Jew, the charge of blasphemy, as they had done that of treason to the Roman Governor, he too did not choose to have any concern in His death, and therefore sent Him back to Pilate. Previously, however, he joined his soldiers and officers in coarsely deriding His pretensions, by clothing Him in a royal robe; and this act has been considered by some as equivalent to a declaration of innocence, as he did not substitute for His own dress the black suit of one capitally condemned. Herod and Pilate had been upon bad terms on several accounts. We learn from St. Luke, (xiii. 1.) that the Governor had massacred some Galileans while worshipping in the Temple; and from Philo, that he had placed without leave, in the Tetrarch's palace, some shields which he had dedicated to Tiberius. In this trial before the Rulers of Galilee and Judæa was verified, according to St. Peter, (Acts iv. 25—28.) a passage in the second Psalm; for in leading the prayer of *their own* then little company, when *they lifted up their voice to God with one accord*, he said, referring to it, *Of a truth against Thy holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together.* The only result of Pilate's courtesy, was his reconciliation with Herod. Still it afforded him a topic in favour of the Prisoner's innocence; and the Tetrarch's concurrence in his opinion, that Jesus had done nothing worthy of death<sup>d</sup>, had the more weight, from his being a Jew.

<sup>d</sup> Such seems to be the sense of *πεπραγμένον αὐτῷ*, and it is so translated by Beza; our own version, which agrees with the Vulgate, *nothing worthy of death done unto Him*, may mean, He had not been treated by Herod like a person guilty of a capital offence.

135. *Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate, who seeks in vain to release Him. Mark xv. 7—9.*

Pilate, having failed in his endeavour to transfer the judgment of Jesus to Herod, again took his seat upon the tribunal, and the reluctance which he felt to pronounce sentence must have been much increased by a message communicated to him by his wife, who charged him to have nothing to do with that just Person, concerning whom she had suffered much in a dream. Her name was Claudia Procula, but nothing more is recorded of her; and the incident confirms the Evangelist's veracity; for although under the Republic Governors were not allowed to take their wives into the Provinces, the practice had become common in consequence of Livia's accompanying Augustus, and a proposal to forbid it had been recently submitted to the Senate without success\*. It had been the Governor's custom for some years at this feast, to please the populace by releasing whatever prisoner they chose to ask for; and Pilate now gave them the option of Jesus or Barabbas, who, beside the very crime of which they accused the former, had been guilty of murder. As Pilate knew that the chief priests had delivered up Jesus from envy, he hoped that the crowd, who had followed Him so lately with acclamations of seeming loyalty, would decide in His favour. He would thus save His life, and the priests would be less irritated if He were set at liberty by an act of grace, than if he acquitted Him. But they had sufficient influence over the people, to make them ask for the liberation of Barabbas and the crucifixion of Jesus; and though the third time Pilate declared that He had committed no capital offence, but that He should be chastised and dismissed, they only cried out the more vehemently, *Crucify Him!*

\* Tacitus, Annals, iii. 33. Cf. i. 40, ii. 54.



136. *Pilate orders Jesus to be scourged, and, after another fruitless attempt to move the pity of the people and declaring His innocence, reluctantly delivers Him to the soldiers to be crucified. John xix. 1—16.*

Pilate now ordered Jesus to be scourged, hoping to appease their fury by this cruel and disgraceful punishment. The bodily pain which it inflicted was heightened by the cruel mockery of the whole band, who put on Him a purple robe and a crown of thorns, and gave Him a reed for a sceptre. They then knelt before Him as a sovereign, till, wearied of this assumed deference, they struck Him with His mock sceptre, spat on Him, and smote Him with their hands upon the head\*. Pilate then exhibited Him to the people in the garb of royalty, and again declared His innocence, saying, *Behold the Man!* Still the chief priests and their attendants persevered in the cry, *Crucify Him! crucify Him!* Pilate's reply appears to have been ironical, for they dared not take the Governor at his word, but returned to the charge on which the Council had condemned Him; *Take ye Him, and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him. He ought to die according to our law,* they answered, *because*

\* An instance of mockery occurred not long after in the reign of Caligula, which, for its striking similarity to the conduct of the soldiers to our Blessed Lord, deserves to be cited. "When Agrippa, who had been appointed to his uncle Philip's tetrarchy with the right of wearing a crown, came to Alexandria on his way to his new dominions, the inhabitants, among other ways of showing their ill will, brought into the Gymnasium, Carabas, a sort of distracted fellow, who at all seasons went naked about the streets, the common jest of boys and idle people: placed him on a lofty seat, put a papyrus wreath on his head instead of a diadem, gave him for a sceptre a short stick of it picked up from the ground, and dressed him in a mat instead of a robe, *χλαμύς*. Having thus given him a mimic royal air, several young men with peles on their shoulders acted as his guard; and others did him homage or solicited justice; while loud and confused acclamations from the crowd of *Maris*, (that is, in Syriac, *Lord*;) intimated whom they meant to ridicule by this mock show." Philo in Flaccum.

*He made Himself the Son of God.* Pilate had hoped, by bringing Jesus before them in this condition, to have excited their compassion; but finding them inexorable, and that they now brought forward a new charge, he was the more afraid, probably from some alarm, lest his Prisoner might be more than a mere mortal. He therefore again withdrew into the palace, and asked Jesus whence He was. Not choosing by revealing His dignity to influence a judge who was concerned only with the question of His innocence, our Saviour made no reply. The Governor expressed his astonishment at His silence: *Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and power to release Thee?* He then answered, *Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he who not having this authority delivered Me unto thee, hath the greater sin;* meaning, I conceive, the high priest, who was better able to know His innocence, and who had forced this trial upon the Governor. The object of the speech seems to have been to teach Pilate, that it was not by accident, but by God's providence, that He stood at his tribunal, and that though ignorance might extenuate his sin, he would not in condemning Him be guiltless. This made Pilate the more anxious to save Him; but the Jews exclaimed, *If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar;* thus intimating a threat of accusing him to his jealous and suspicious master Tiberius, by whom he had been reprimanded not long before. Pilate now came out on the Pavement, and had Jesus once more brought forth, and expostulated with the people; *Shall I crucify your King?* They answer, *We have no king but Cæsar,* thus publicly renouncing their allegiance to their Messiah. Seeing that the people grew tumultuous, and apprehending that his acquittal of Jesus might be represented as treasonable, Pilate at length sacrificed his conscience to his fear. But first he

appealed to their religious feelings, by transferring as far as he could the guilt of the compulsory sentence he was about to pronounce from himself to them, by washing his hands before them in token of his innocence. This he might do agreeably to an heathen rite; yet, as it was on the Jews that he wanted to make an impression, it is more probable that he imitated, as far as he could, the law of Moses, which, in the case of an unknown murder, ordered the elders of the nearest city to wash their hands publicly, and say, *Our hands have not shed this blood.* (Deut. xxi. 6.) Not only the priests, but also the people, showed themselves eager to take the responsibility upon themselves and their posterity; *His blood be on us and on our children!* But though they could not exonerate Pilate, they thus made the condemnation of the Messiah completely a national act; and the weight of this blood lies heavy on their dispersed and despised posterity, even at this distant day!

It is unprecedented in the annals of mankind, that a person, at the very time that he is capitally condemned, should be declared to be innocent by the person who delivered him up, by the judge who passed sentence, and by the officer who superintended his execution; while those who so clamorously demanded His crucifixion, could prove no charge against Him. So wonderfully were all the circumstances arranged, to make it evident that Jesus suffered unjustly. We may also observe, that as the various methods taken by Pilate to save His life were unsuccessful, they only served to aggravate and protract His sufferings. At first sight it seems scarcely credible, that a whole people should cry out for the putting to death as a malefactor one whose whole life had been a succession of acts of benevolence, *who went about doing good*, and had miraculously healed the diseased, removed bodily defects, and even restored the dead to life. But our astonishment will cease on recollect-

ing, that a miracle, which we justly regard as a decisive proof of a divine mission, was in that age only considered indicative of the agency of a Being more powerful than man. They did not like us infer the truth of the doctrine from the miracle, but from the nature of the doctrine, whether the agent was an Angel or a Demon: and according to their prejudices, the doctrine of our Lord was blasphemous. The soldiers, on the condemnation of Jesus by the Governor, stripped Him of His royal robe, but left on His head the crown of thorns; so that when He hung naked upon the cross, He still appeared as a King.

137. *Judas returns the bribe he had received; and after declaring his Master's innocence, hangs himself in despair.*  
*Matt. xxvii. 3—10. Acts i. 18—20.*

Judas, finding that Jesus was condemned to death, and that He wrought no miracle for His deliverance, repented, but not like Peter with *a godly sorrow*; for his grief produced not contrition but remorse, which drove him to despair and suicide. Still, however, he offered the only reparation in his power. He wished to return his bribe to the priests, declaring that he had sinned in delivering up an innocent person; but they unfeelingly answered, *What is that to us? thou art to see to that.* Hereupon he flung the thirty pieces of silver into the temple, it should seem into the sanctuary itself, (ναὸς,) and withdrew and hung himself, probably before his Master's crucifixion. St. Peter's description of his death (Acts i. 18.) may be reconciled with that of the Evangelist, by supposing that after he had suspended himself, the bough of the tree broke; and that, falling from a considerable height, he burst asunder; and certainly the wood of the tree, which from the tradition that he hung himself on it bears his name, is very brittle. The rulers consulted what was to be done with the money which

he had rejected. They scrupled to lay it out for religious uses ; but, wishing to spend it in some way that might appear charitable, they purchased with it a potter's field, of course of little value, for the burial of strangers ; and so inadvertently fulfilled a prophecy of Zechariah. (xi. 12.)

138. *Jesus is led away to be crucified. Matt. xxvii. Mark xv. Luke xxiii.*

Jesus was now taken to be crucified at the third hour<sup>f</sup>. We read of Crucifixion in the history of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Carthaginians. The latter, we may suppose, received it from their ancestors, the Canaanites : yet though it was probably known in the time of Moses, the Divine Author of his code was too merciful to condemn even the worst offenders to so cruel a punishment ; and therefore it would not have been endured by our Lord, if the sovereignty of the Holy Land had not passed over to the Romans. Among them it was the mode of executing persons of the lowest condition, and was deemed so disgraceful, that Cicero in his Oration for Rabirius, exclaims, that it should be absent not from the bodies only of Roman citizens, but from their thoughts, their eyes, and their ears, the expectation and even the very naming of the Cross being unworthy of a free man ; and when expatiating upon the crimes of Verres, he singles out as the most atrocious, the crucifixion of a citizen of Rome, declaring, that no language is adequate to stigmatise sufficiently the infliction upon such of this most cruel and most shocking punishment, which was reserved for slaves<sup>g</sup>. “ To bind a citizen of Rome, is a crime ; to beat him, an enormity ; to put him to death, almost parricide ; what shall I call the lifting up upon a cross ? ” To the ancients, then, the Cross

<sup>f</sup> St. John writes, *at the sixth*, but his text must have been early corrupted, for the reading *third* of some Mss. is confirmed by Clement of Alexandria, and by St. John's versifier Nonnus.

<sup>g</sup> Juvenal, vi. 218. Cicero in Verrem, v.

of Christ was a stumbling-block in a higher degree than can well be conceived by us; for the use of it, abolished by Constantine out of respect to our Saviour, has never been revived; and to our imagination it is dignified and sanctified by His having made it the very instrument of His triumph. (Eph. ii. 16.) To a Roman, who saw in it nothing more than the legal mode of punishing foreigners and slaves, it was only associated with ideas of guilt and ignominy. "The Pagans," says Justin Martyr, in his second Apology, "are fully convinced of our insanity, for giving the second place, after the immutable and eternal God and Father of all, to a person who was crucified." To the Jews it was even still more odious; for they esteemed Him who died on it as not only condemned by men, but forsaken by God. "The Person whom you call the Messiah," says the Jew Trypho in his dialogue with that Father, "incurred the lowest infamy, since He fell under the greatest curse of the law: He was crucified; for it is written, *Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree*<sup>1</sup>." The very same text had been previously brought forward by an Apostle, (Gal. iii. 13.) to magnify the Saviour's love, in suffering for us as an execrable malefactor; and we perceive, from this consent of Gentile and Jew, that when it is said that *Christ endured the Cross*, (Heb. xii. 2.) it might well be added, *despising the shame*. How striking then to the Galatians must have been the Apostle's expression of glorying in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which must have appeared to them a contradiction in terms. "The Cross in itself was an object full of shame: as borne by Jesus, it was full of glory. It would have been less remarkable, if he had only said he gloried in his Redeemer's exaltation after He left the world, or in the glory which He had enjoyed with His Father before He entered into it; but the object of the Apostle's glorying is the Redeemer, not as powerful and

<sup>1</sup> Justin, p. 271, 90.

exalted, but as condemned and crucified. We shall cease, however, to wonder when we consider, that in the Cross we have the brightest display of the union of Divine justice and Divine mercy; justice in punishing our sins in Him, mercy in forgiving them for His sake<sup>1</sup>.” Crucifixion was likewise, from the pain it gave, and its long duration, a most cruel punishment; so that the Romans, to express the greatest degree of suffering, borrowed from it the term, which we retain, *excruciating*<sup>k</sup>. The prisoner, having first been scourged, and stripped naked, was fastened to the upright beam, by tying or nailing his feet; and on the transverse by his hands, wounds in which, from the abundance of the nerves, are peculiarly painful; and these wounds by exposure to the air would soon become inflamed. From the unnatural position in which the body is placed, a more than usual quantity of blood is impelled into the stomach and head, and the obstruction to its return into the system produces an intolerable internal excitement, which is continually increasing<sup>l</sup>. Thus suspended, some persons hung for days, until they perished through agony and want of food, for no part of the punishment was in itself mortal; but Jesus expired after six hours, worn out by His previous sufferings. Dreadful as must have been the punishment to all, it was greatly aggravated in the case of our Redeemer both as to body and soul; and it is well that we should remember it, because it is related without any attempt to work upon the feelings, and they are naturally blunted by our familiarity with the fact.

The place of execution was called Golgotha, or the place of a skull, from its rounded shape, or the tradition that the skull of Adam had been found there; and is, through the

<sup>i</sup> Maclaurin's Sermons. “*On Glorifying in the Cross.*”

<sup>k</sup> Cooper's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 209.

<sup>l</sup> From the Pictorial Bible, which derives this information from a German Physician, who wrote a treatise on our Lord's Crucifixion.

Vulgate translation, better known to us by the Latin name of Calvary. It was the invariable custom, that every one who was to be nailed to the cross should first carry it<sup>m</sup>, that is, the transverse beam, for the whole would have been too ponderous. Plutarch, (*de sera Num. vindicta*), alluding to it, says, that each sin brings with it its punishment; and our Lord, prophetically referring to His own mode of death, had before invited His disciples to imitate Him by taking up the cross. This Jesus was required to do; but He was already so exhausted, that, after bearing it beyond the gate, He sunk under the burden, and they were obliged to remove it to another. Nor will this surprise us, if we consider, that He had already endured more than any other person that has been led to public execution. He had had no sleep the night before: for after the paschal supper, instead of returning as He had been accustomed to Bethany, He was taken as a prisoner to the father-in-law of the High Priest. The night and early morning had passed away in His trials before the Sanhedrim, the Governor, Herod, and the Governor again; and He had not only been hurried from place to place, but had been stricken and buffeted by the High Priest's servants, by Herod's guards, and by Pilate's court, and once at least cruelly scourged. He had carried His cross beyond the gate, for convicts were not to suffer within the walls, either according to Roman or Jewish Law; but He now sunk under His burden, and they transferred it to Simon the Cyrenian, who was then entering the town. It is so rarely that the Evangelists mention names, that there must be some reason for this deviation from a general rule, especially as St. Mark adds, he was the father of Alexander and Rufus. We find among the Roman saints saluted by the Apostle in his Epistle, a Rufus *chosen in the Lord*; and his mother,

<sup>m</sup> Artemidorus, *Ov.* ii. 61. *Furcifer*, the Latin for a rogue, means literally he who carries the furca, that is, the instrument on which he is to suffer.



like others commemorated therein, must have *bestowed much labour* upon Paul, for he calls her, *his mother and mine*. It is thought that Simon must have been already a follower of Jesus; and if St. Mark wrote at Rome, and Rufus was then resident there, it is natural that he should make mention of him. Simon was a native of Cyrene, a city founded by the Greeks, on the African coast between Carthage and Egypt, then a flourishing settlement, but which has been long deserted. A colony of Jews had been planted there by the first Ptolemy, and they maintained such intercourse with the mother country, that they had in Jerusalem a Synagogue for their special use in conjunction with those of Alexandria. (Acts vi. 9.) Whether Simon was settled in Judæa, or a stranger who had arrived to keep the Passover, does not appear; but we know, that among the foreign Jews who came from a distance to attend the following feast of Pentecost, were some from *the parts of Lybia about Cyrene*. (Acts ii. 10.) A great multitude of the people followed, especially of women, who beat their breasts, and lamented Him. Jesus, regardless of His own sufferings, took this last opportunity of directing their thoughts to the guilt and impending ruin of their nation: *If they do these things to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?* that is, if the Romans inflict this punishment upon the innocent, how awful will be the fate of this sinful nation. Two malefactors (who were *robbers*<sup>m</sup>) were led out to suffer with Him; and thus was literally fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy, (liii. 12.) *He was numbered among the transgressors*. They were probably associates of Barabbas, whom the infatuated people preferred to the Lord of life and glory. It was permitted to give condemned persons a draught of wine mingled with myrrh, of a stupefying quality; and some charitable person seems to have prepared for Him this cordial, but, having tasted, He declined drinking it, doubt-

<sup>m</sup> λησται, not κλεπται, thieves.

less because His purpose being to suffer death in all its bitterness<sup>n</sup>, He would recur to no mode of mitigating it. The refreshment offered by the Roman soldiers, there was not the same reason to refuse.

139. *The Crucifixion.* Matt. xxvii. Mark xv. Luke xxiii. John xix.

Four Roman soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, and while they were so employed, He *interceded for the transgressors*, (Isa. liii. 12.) pleading their ignorance, the only circumstance that could be urged in extenuation of their guilt. The elevation of the cross, and the necessarily violent precipitation of it into the cavity prepared for it, must have given a convulsive shock to the whole frame of a person fastened to it. But it seems more probable that it was first erected, and that Jesus was afterwards placed on it; and it was probably much lower than painters, who have never seen one, have represented it, to heighten the effect. Above His head, as was customary, was written the cause for which He suffered, in the three languages that were in use; and Pilate had so worded it, that it expressed what He really was, to the mortification of the Priests; and he would not alter it at their request, to suit their view of Him. The soldiers divided among themselves His cloak; but as His inner vest, being woven without

<sup>n</sup> When, in the reign of Gallienus, A.D. 262, Fructuosus, bishop of Taragona, and his two deacons, were led to be burnt in the amphitheatre, their friends offered them spiced wine, which they, in imitation of their Saviour, refused.

Sic Christus sitiens Crucis sub hora

Oblatum sibi poculum recusans,

Nec libare volens sitim peregit. *Prudentius*, Hymn vi.

Ruinart *Acta Martyrum*, p. 220. The wine mixed with myrrh of Mark, and the vinegar mixed with gall of Matthew, appear to be two names for the same cup, for *χολή* means not gall only, but also any bitter herb. (Jeremiah xxiii. 15. viii. 14.) This deadly wine (*οἶνον κατανύξεως*, Psalm lx. 3.) is the same as that which is called, with apparent contradiction, *οἶνον ἄκρατον κεκρασμένον*, that is, wine unmixed with water, but mixed with stupefying drugs. *Give strong drink unto him who is ready to perish*, (Proverbs xxxi. 6.) is a reference to this custom.

seam, would have been useless if rent, they cast lots for it, whereby they fulfilled unconsciously two minute predictions in that wonderful Psalm, (xxii.) which is throughout a prophetic history of the Saviour's final sufferings and ultimate triumph, and to which He drew the attention of the bystanders, and of future ages, by repeating the opening of it while on the cross. In this painful state He continued from the sixth to the ninth hour, that is, from nine in the morning to three in the afternoon, exposed to the mockery of both people and rulers, who insulted Him, as I have already observed, in the prophetic language of the twenty-second Psalm. One, too, even of His fellow-sufferers joined in reviling Him; but the other acknowledged that He *had done nothing amiss*, and received in return the assurance that he should accompany Him that very day to Paradise, the place of departed spirits\*. His petition was only, *Lord, remember Me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom*; but Jesus granted him more than he had asked, an immediate reward; and thus, in the moment of His greatest degradation, performed an act of divine Sovereignty, by the forgiveness of sin. This case is a solitary instance which can never occur again: recorded to preserve the penitent dying sinner from despair, by showing that even those that at the last extremity throw themselves upon the Redeemer's mercy, will be admitted into His Kingdom. At the same time it holds out no encouragement to any who sin against conviction, and presumptuously flatter themselves that they shall have time and inclination to repent upon a death-bed. Probably, as has been well observed, no one ever so improved a dying hour as this

\* This distinction, familiar to the Jews, is observed by St. Paul, who tells the Corinthians (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) that he was caught up both to the third Heaven and to Paradise; that in the former he might contemplate the scene of supreme felicity which awaits the just after the general resurrection: and that in the latter, he might be acquainted with their present enjoyment of the intermediate state.

robber, or under such unfavourable circumstances ; for he believed Jesus to be the Messiah, when one disciple had betrayed, another had denied, and all had forsaken Him ; when the nation had rejected Him, and His crucifixion seemed to prove that He was disowned not only by them, but by God. This robber acknowledged the justice of his own sentence, and bore testimony to the innocence of Jesus ; he was moreover only anxious for salvation ; for he could have nothing to hope or fear in a world which he must leave so soon ; and therefore he must have believed in the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom. His faith then we see was of that saving kind, which would have expanded into all the actions of a Christian life, if time had been afforded. One instance only of the acceptance of a dying repentance is recorded, that none might despair ; and only one, that none might presume. We need not, however, suppose, that this was his first knowledge of Jesus to enhance our wonder : he might even have heard Him discourse, and the darkness which convinced the centurion, might also have affected him.

In the height of His sufferings, Jesus still showed His affection for His mother, who, accompanied by her sister Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary of Magdala, and the beloved disciple, had the resolution to stand near. To the care of the last He bequeathed her, and she henceforth shared his home. About three o'clock, Jesus cried out in the Psalmist's words, *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* Commentators generally suppose that He spoke under the influence of the feelings which had oppressed Him during His agony, and that the words show that the withdrawing from His Spirit of the consolatory presence of His Father was more dreadful to Him than all the sufferings that the malice of His enemies could inflict. Others, that by commencing the Psalm, He meant not to express His own feelings, but to declare the fulfilment of it.

A centurion with some soldiers was in attendance. A vessel of diluted vinegar<sup>p</sup>, their ordinary beverage, stood near them, and Jesus complaining of thirst, the natural consequence of His acute suffering, one of them raised up to Him on a stalk of hyssop a sponge dipped in it<sup>q</sup>. The rest, less merciful, said, *Let us see if Elias will come to take Him down*, not understanding His language, and supposing that when He said *Eli*, He had called not upon God, but on the prophet Elijah, as He cited the Psalm in Hebrew, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*. *When I was thirsty, they gave me vinegar to drink*, exclaims David, as the Saviour's type, in the sixty-ninth Psalm; and our Lord having received it on the sponge, cried out with all the energy that He could exert, *It is finished*; and then having again in a loud voice exclaimed, *Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit*, He bowed His head, ἔξέπνευσε, and expired.

This circumstance of the loud voice is mentioned by the first three Evangelists, to mark, in the opinion of Doddridge, that the surrendering His Spirit was a voluntary act; and this he endeavours to support from the language of Matthew, ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα, and of John, παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα: but the former phrase is also that of Euripides, (Hecuba 571.) even in describing the sacrifice of Polyxena, and seems, like *he fell on sleep*, used of Stephen when stoned, to mean no more than a peaceful departure out of life. Doddridge's opinion is supported by Hales and other eminent divines, but it appears open to the objection, that it makes our Lord's death not the act of the Jews and Gentiles, but His own. The intention of His loud cry was, I conceive, that all might hear His dying declaration of confidence in His Father, and

<sup>p</sup> Some commentators take ὕξος for a weak acid wine, but it was vinegar mixed with water, called *posca*, and it appears from a law of Constantine, that soldiers were on alternate days provided with such liquor.

<sup>q</sup> The hyssop is said to grow higher in Palestine than in the south of Europe, and the Cross was also probably lower than it is generally represented.

for this purpose, I suppose, His mind triumphing over His body, rallied for a final effort.

Thus died the righteous King of the Jews the death of a criminal slave, and by death *finished* the work He had come into the world to accomplish, the deliverance not only of His own, but of all nations from the bondage of Satan, and their restoration to the favour of their Creator, and the capability of holiness and happiness. Having slain *the enmity* by the Cross, *Mercy and Truth*, to use the Psalmist's words, (Ps. 86.) *met together, Righteousness and Peace kissed each other.* The Mission of the Son of God was finished: henceforward He had nothing to detain Him on earth, but to satisfy His disciples of His Resurrection, and to instruct them in *the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.* Forty days were employed in qualifying them for their office of Evangelists, and then He returned to the glory which He had enjoyed from the beginning with His Father, but of which He had divested Himself for a short season, "for us men and for our salvation."

140, 141. *The prodigies that ensued. The body of Jesus is granted by the Governor to Joseph of Arimathæa, who deposits it in his own new tomb. Matt. xxvii. 45—61. Mark xv. 38—47. Luke xxiv. 44—56. John xix. 31—42.*

The death of Jesus was accompanied with miracles sufficient to convince all, who did not wilfully shut their eyes, that He was the Christ; and we read that the centurion who was in attendance was so affected by some of those signs, as well as by His dying behaviour, that he exclaimed, *This was truly the Son of God!* As there is no article in this speech, as recorded by the first two Evangelists, some would render it a son of a God, as if the centurion, an idolater, took Jesus

for one of his own deities. But it is equally wanting in both nouns when His revilers said, *if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross*; and Middleton, in his doctrine of the Greek Article, explains the omission. Since the cause of His condemnation was claiming this appellation in a higher and peculiar sense, it is more reasonable to understand it as a confession of His being the Messiah, of whom even a Gentile living in Judæa must have heard; and the corresponding passage in Luke, *Certainly this Man was righteous*, that is, He was innocent, and really was what He professed to be, with the remark, that the centurion *glorified*, or praised, *God*, confirms this interpretation, and may even imply his conversion. These miracles were, 1. a preternatural darkness; 2. the rending of the veil which divided the "Holy of Holies" from the outer sanctuary; and 3. an earthquake, followed by the resurrection of the bodies of some of the saints. 1. This darkness, which continued three hours, half the time that Jesus hung upon the Cross, seems to have had an immediate effect, for the scoffs and insults levelled at our Saviour were all during the first three hours of the crucifixion, and a manifest change of feeling towards Him, arising, as it should seem, from a certain misgiving as to His character, is discoverable in the bystanders after the expiration of that time. Is not this change of conduct very naturally explained by the awe with which they contemplated the fearful darkness that came on<sup>t</sup>? Commentators are not agreed whether the term, the whole earth, is to be taken in the most extensive sense, or to be restricted to Judæa. The early Christian writers appealed to the Roman Archives in confirmation of the fact, which they considered universal; but the word rendered earth, as we have seen before, does not necessarily mean more than the whole land of Judæa,

<sup>t</sup> Blunt on the Veracity of the Gospels.

and the restriction of it to the country in which our Lord suffered seems to be most appropriate. This darkness probably resembled that brought upon Egypt by Moses, and must have been miraculous; for the length of its duration, and the period when it occurred, the full moon, prevent our ascribing it to an eclipse. 2. The Rending of the Veil, threw open to view the *tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all*, which the successor of Aaron was alone permitted to enter; but now when our great High Priest, whom he but represented, was about to enter *into heaven itself*, of which that *worldly sanctuary* was the type, it significantly intimated, that the figurative dispensation of Moses was to be done away. Henceforth the privilege which one individual had alone enjoyed, and that only once every year, was to be bestowed upon all believers, who on all days might draw near, *in full assurance of faith*, to the mercy-seat of God, with the confidence that they should be heard through the prevailing merits of the Priest of a better covenant, who, having propitiated His Father by the sacrifice of Himself, has sat down for ever at His right hand, to make intercession for them. As Christ the true victim expired at the time of evening sacrifice, some of the priests must have been present; yet we do not hear that any were converted by the prodigy. A curtain hanging as a door would naturally be torn from the bottom *upwards*; the rending of it *downwards* is therefore noticed by the Evangelist. 3. The third sign was an earthquake, which shivered the rocks and threw open graves; out of which, (but not till after the resurrection of Him who was the *first-fruits of them that slept*, 1 Cor. xv. 20.) *the bodies of many of the saints that slept arose, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many*, as an earnest of the resurrection of all. Commentators are not agreed whether they were the saints of former ages, or persons who had lately died. The latter is the most probable opinion; for David is soon after



mentioned by Peter (Acts ii. 29.) as still buried ; and we can hardly suppose, if the saints of the former dispensation had risen, that he would have been left in the grave ; moreover, the resurrection of personal acquaintance would more effectually confirm the faith of believers. The multitude, we find, rightly interpreted these prodigies as testimonies of God's approbation of the Sufferer, and returned with the strongest demonstrations of sorrow ; for their rage, which had been artfully excited, had given place to regret and self-reproach ; and their conviction of His innocence thus attested prepared the way for the conversion of the three thousand, on the ensuing feast of Pentecost.

The Mosaic Law, (Deut. xxi. 22.) requiring that the bodies of malefactors should be taken down and buried on the day of their execution, *that the land be not defiled*, was still in force<sup>u</sup> ; and it was the Roman custom, in ordinary cases, to grant to them the rites of sepulture. Ulpian, on the Duties of a Proconsul, states, that the bodies of executed persons ought to be given up to their relatives, according to the practice of Augustus ; and Tiberius's withholding them is represented both by Tacitus (Ann. vi. 29.) and Suetonius (61.) as an act of uncommon cruelty. The approaching Festival, when the first sheaf of the harvest was to be reaped, and from which the feast of weeks, called by the Hellenists Pentecost, was reckoned, was always a *high day*, and that year a double Sabbath. The rulers, therefore, waited upon Pilate to request that the legs of the convicts might be broken to hasten death, that they might be removed before the evening. Thus our Lord's enemies made themselves instrumental to the fulfilment of His promise to the penitent thief, that he should *that day* be with Him in Paradise ; and their not breaking His limbs, was an additional evidence that He had previously expired. Even if He had been then alive, the wound of the lance,

<sup>u</sup> Josephus, War, iv. 5.

with which one of the soldiers pierced His side, which is supposed to have penetrated the heart, must have produced death. He who saw the wound given has borne witness to the fact; not the soldier, called in the legend from his spear (λόγχη) Longinus, but the Evangelist himself; for otherwise it would have been not he who saw, but he who pierced; and he adds, *He knoweth that he saith true*; a phraseology usual with St. John; yet here, with Wakefield, I have no doubt (from his use, instead of αὐτός, *he*, of the pronoun ἐκεῖνος, *that person*,) that he speaks not of himself, but appeals to his Master, as the Searcher of hearts, to vouch it also. The verb *bare record*, or rather hath borne record, μεμαρτύρηκε, is in the past sense; and may we not suppose that this beloved disciple, who saw the wound inflicted, *bare record* afterwards, not only in conversation, but also in his Epistle, which is generally believed to have been written long before his Gospel? From the mode in which he there refers to it, he appears to have had a deeper meaning, and to have recorded the fact not only as an evidence of his Lord's death, but as emblematical of the twofold salvation which He thereby wrought for believers, deliverance both from the guilt and from the dominion of sin; of Justification and of Sanctification, of which the two Sacraments under the "outward and visible signs" of water, and of wine, (as representing the blood,) are memorials and pledges.

Crucifixion is a lingering punishment, not in its nature mortal, which proves fatal only by gradual exhaustion. To live on the cross three days was a common occurrence; and Timotheus, and Maura his wife, who were among the martyrs of Upper Egypt, under the persecution of the Emperor Gallus, A. D. 253\*, are said not to have expired till the ninth. Many perished, not from the punishment itself, but from hunger; some were devoured by birds of prey; and there are instances

\* Baronius.

of persons, who, being taken down alive, recovered ; as one of three friends of Josephus, who were granted to his solicitations by Titus<sup>v</sup>. Pilate, therefore, and the centurion on duty of whom he enquired, were surprised, that Jesus, after hanging only six hours on the cross, should be dead ; and the surprise of the centurion was the greater, because he knew that He had expired with a loud exclamation, which proved His strength to be entire at the time.

A desire to ascertain, or ensure His death, was the motive that led the soldier to pierce His side ; and the solemnity of the Evangelist's words, occurring as they do in the middle of a narrative, and almost interrupting the connection of a sentence, show that he considered the fact of the water and the blood gushing forth as most important. "Commentators," says Dr. Burton, in his Bampton Lectures for 1829, "have generally agreed, that the fact here so earnestly stated as a matter of belief, was the death of Jesus ; and modern commentators will add, that the presence of water mixed with blood, proves that the pericardium was pierced ; and it has been asserted, that in the case of persons dying from torture, the quantity of water is increased. I have no hesitation in asserting, that to prove the death of Christ from this fact, is an idea entirely modern ; and when we consider the very general success which the Gnostic doctrines had met with in Asia, it seems more natural to suppose, that St. John recorded this fact, with a view to confute the Docetæ. Of all the circumstances which attended the crucifixion, none would be more conclusive for the corporeal nature of Jesus ; and it was natural that the Evangelist should dwell with particular emphasis upon a fact which he had seen with his own eyes, and which so powerfully confuted the arguments of his opponents." The Professor has shown, that, in recording the fact, the Evangelist intended to

<sup>v</sup> See Josephus's Life of himself.

confute the Gnostics ; but there appears to be no necessity for concluding that this was his only design. On the contrary, I believe that it is also recorded as evidence of death. As such it is most important, for it anticipates the objection of infidels, that Jesus did not die in consequence of Crucifixion. A difficulty has been felt by some medical writers, and some have even maintained that He was still alive when pierced, though clearly in opposition to the context, and others that the gushing forth of blood and water was preternatural; but I insert, from the Evangelical Register of the same year (1829); some interesting observations by a Physician, who writes under the signature of Jason, which appear to throw light both upon this obscure passage, and upon our Lord's sufferings. " It has been supposed from His previous declaration, that no man took His life from Him, but that He laid it down of Himself; but the repeated declaration, that He was put to death by His enemies, shows that the former language meant no more than that He might, if He pleased, have declined to die." The record concerning the blood and the water, this writer considers as explaining, (at least to a more scientific age,) that the real cause of the death of Jesus was rupture of the heart, occasioned by mental agony. Such rupture is attended by instant death, without previous exhaustion, and by the effusion into the pericardium of blood, which in this particular case, though scarcely in any other, separates into its two constituent parts, so as to present the appearance commonly termed blood and water<sup>a</sup>. A degree of mental distress, far inferior to that endured by Him who was emphatically styled, *the Man of sorrows*, has a tendency to produce bloody sweat, oppression of the chest, incapacity of exertion,

<sup>a</sup> Bonnet gives two examples, vol. i. p. 585, 887. I have constantly found water in the pericardium of persons capitally punished, says the author of the article *Pericarde*, in the Yverdun Encyclopedie.

and, finally, rupture of the heart; especially if accompanied with prolonged physical exertions, particularly in a constrained position. These symptoms are expressed, or implied, throughout the narrative of the sufferings of Jesus. Thus, on entering the garden, He exclaimed, *My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death*; and it seems to be intimated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, (v. 4—9.) that death would have been the speedy result of His agony, if He had not been strengthened by supernatural aid: yet, though supported by an angel, His sweat was as clots of blood falling to the ground. This implies excessive palpitation, and on His way to Golgotha, although, as appears from the sequel, His inward strength was unimpaired, He required another to bear His Cross. Sudden death is also sometimes occasioned by passions of the mind, without the intervention of rupture of the heart; but, in that case, the blood, instead of coagulating, remains liquid, and in mere dilatation of the heart from grief, the mode of death is not so rapid, nor if the side were pierced, would the effusion be so immediate, or so abundant. The prophecy, *Reproach hath broken my heart, I am full of heaviness, I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, my heart like wax is melted in the midst of my body*, would on this supposition be literally fulfilled. (Psalms xxii. lxix.) This fact the writer considers as giving a peculiar propriety to the passage, in which the Saviour is described as *pouring out His life's blood unto death*. (Isaiah liii. 12.) The sacrifices that typify His death imply that it was an atonement for sin, a doctrine continually asserted in the Epistles, and apparent from the peculiarity of His behaviour. He who sustained with firmness every other trial, was destined to endure an infliction of overwhelming severity, in which the very perfection of His character was to prove the principal cause of distress. To advance the Divine glory by magnifying the law, and to accomplish the salvation of

mankind, Christ consented to lose the light of God's countenance, including the sense of His favour, and the comfort of His communion, although fully aware that the misery thus incurred would occasion His death. We may deduce from His agony in the garden, and the revival of His mental sufferings on the Cross, that the death of Jesus was not merely that of a martyr in a righteous cause, which would have been, if not triumphant, yet without dismay, but that of an atoning victim. It was the only death worthy of Him to suffer, who was the spotless *Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world*, and of Him to accept, who had announced *the sacrifices of God to be a broken spirit*. It was the death of a pure and perfect Man, sustaining and discharging the penalty due to human depravity, thereby acquiring an equitable claim to *see of the travail of His soul, and to be satisfied*, and demonstrating, as was designed, that God is at the same time *both just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*." At this time was verified in this true paschal Lamb the command, *a bone of it shall not be broken*; and that by heathen soldiers, who passed Him by, while they broke the legs of both the others who were *in the same condemnation*. It is quoted, we may believe, to teach believers even to the end of time, that the minutest injunctions of the ceremonial Law had been devised in order to direct the spiritual worshipper to Christ, a Saviour from sin. From this and other quotations in the New Testament we learn, not only that the Law broadly shadowed forth in its ordinances the Gospel, but that the types and antitypes were made to correspond, even in points in which, unless it had been pointed out to us by an authority which cannot be disputed, we should hardly have discovered the resemblance. Such a correspondence could only be effected by the providence of the Supreme Disposer of events, who knoweth all things from the beginning, and

can alone so plan the ceremonies of one age, as to harmonize with the events of another. It also fulfilled Zechariah's Prophecy, (xii. 10.) *They shall look on Him whom they pierced*; in those who mourning for Him as an only Son, afterwards believed in Him; and it will be again fearfully fulfilled in His enemies, when He *cometh in clouds* at His final Advent, with a reference to which it seems to have been again cited by the beloved disciple in his description of the Revelation (i. 7.) granted to him in the isle of Patmos.

Isaiah had foretold what appeared to be incompatible, that the Messiah should suffer an ignominious death, and yet receive an honourable interment. Both predictions, however, were perfectly accomplished in Jesus; for the wisdom of God, provided that the body of our Lord should be handled only by holy men, and that the most honourable interment, the prelude of a glorious Resurrection, should follow this most ignominious death. Two men of rank and fortune, Joseph of Arimathæa and Nicodemus, who from fear had hitherto concealed their belief, now disregarding the shame of the cross, even before their Master's resurrection had shed a glory over it, testified openly their respect for Him, the first by requesting His body from the governor, the second by preparing for its embalment; while the Apostles, with the exception of John, were afraid of showing themselves. The request was granted; and as Joseph had excavated for himself a sepulchre in a garden close to Calvary, that fact, as well as the approach of the Sabbath, decided where they should place it. Had the tomb been distant, they would naturally have taken it in the first instance to a friend's house; and as the Sabbath was coming on, it must have remained wherever it had been deposited, till the day of rest was over. It was certainly a providential concurrence of circumstances that induced them to take it directly from the cross to the place which best suited the event that was reserved for the

third day, and where it was left under the custody of enemies, who by the very precautions they took to prevent imposition, supplied themselves decisive evidence of the fact of our Lord's Resurrection. Whatever was requisite to fulfil the prediction, *With the rich man was His tomb*, (Isaiah liii.) was done, and no more; for though the body was deposited on a bed of spices, it was not embalmed. His friends indeed piously intended to pay Him this last tribute of respect, but their intention was delayed by the intervention of the Sabbath, and when that was over, death had ceased to have dominion over Him. It was to fulfil this melancholy duty, that the women visited the sepulchre so early in the morning of the resurrection-day; and their hastening thither proved a blessing to themselves, and an advantage to the Apostles; for though they treated their reports as idle tales, yet the intelligence must have had an effect upon their minds, and when the proof was brought home to them by the Lord's appearance to themselves on the same day, they were prepared to see Him with less surprise and perturbation. Nicodemus, who was wealthy, testified his regard by the prodigious quantity of spices which he brought, enough, it has been suggested by enemies, to embalm in the ordinary way two hundred bodies. The quantity was no less than a hundred pounds weight of a mixture of myrrh and aloes<sup>b</sup>; on this, as on a bed, he and Joseph laid the corpse<sup>c</sup>, and swathed it in linen bandages; and then, as the Sabbath was drawing on, they rolled a great stone against the sepulchre, and withdrew; meaning, when it was over, to complete the honour they intended to pay. Mary Magdalene

<sup>b</sup> The aloes mentioned here and in Psalm xlv. 9. was not the purgative drug now known by that name, but *Excæcaria agallocha*, an aromatic gum, very fragrant and of high price, which was imported from the farther East.

<sup>c</sup> We learn, both from the history of King Asa in the Old Testament, (2 Chron. xvi. 14.) and of Herod the Great in Josephus, (Ant. xxxiii.) that at grand funerals the Jews were accustomed to lay deceased persons upon a bed filled with spices, part of which was afterwards burnt at their burial.



and Mary the wife of Cleophas, the virgin's sister, had sat over against it till the sabbath admonished them to retire. As Zebedee's wife, Salome, though generally mentioned with them, is not named on this occasion, it is a reasonable conjecture that she was in attendance upon our Lord's mother; and had, with the beloved disciple, prevailed upon her to leave the afflicting spectacle of His sufferings, *while the sword was piercing through her own soul*, soon after she had been consigned to his care as a son. These women were then too much absorbed in sorrow to make any preparation for the embalming; consequently they could not (as the Sabbath soon commenced) procure spices till after sunset on Saturday evening; whereas Joanna and their other friends might have been ready with their share before, and none of them seem to have been aware of what had been done already by Nicodemus and Joseph. The observation, that the tomb was a new one, and hewn out of a rock, is no trivial one, for it shows that there could be no entrance through which a body might be secretly conveyed away, and as no other had been ever deposited in it, there could be no doubt of the identity of the Person that rose again. The enemies of Jesus also who had procured His death, unconsciously, by their precautions, defeated their own scheme; for the following morning, when their passover was over, they, recollecting what the disciples had forgotten, requested, and obtained from the governor, a guard, and secured the sepulchre with a seal, so that there could be no fraud on the part of the soldiers; whereby they have supplied to future ages the most unexceptionable evidence of the reality of our Lord's Resurrection.

## PART VII.

142—145. *The visit of the first party of women to the sepulchre.*

*Matt.* xxvii. 1—15. *Mark* xvi. 1—11. *John* xx. 1—18.

THE Resurrection of our Saviour is the pledge and earnest of our own. It is at once the *substance* and the *evidence* of Christianity: the *substance*, because as in Adam we all died, eternal life is through Christ the gift of God to all who believe and obey Him; the *evidence*, because it sets God's seal to the reality of His divine mission, and to the truth of His doctrines. No one who believes the resurrection of Jesus to be a fact, can doubt His veracity or power; but belief to be reasonable must be built upon evidence, and the more extraordinary any event is, and the more important in its consequences, the stronger is the evidence that we require, before we give to it our assent. St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 14.) allows, that if Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins; we might therefore expect that all the Evangelists would bear testimony to this fact; and accordingly we find, that it is not only recorded by each, but is proved by the narration of several appearances of their Master after His Resurrection. The fact had been obscurely predicted by Hosea, (vi. 2.) *In the third day He will raise us up;* and by Isaiah, (xxvi. 19.) *Thy dead shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise;* and the Psalmist (xvi. 10.) had more plainly spoken as the Messiah, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption;* but Jesus Himself had, whenever He deemed it expedient, repeatedly, without a figure, announced that He should rise again on the third day after He had been put to death. Before that day had closed, He ate and conversed with ten of His Apostles together. He had previously appeared to Mary Magdalene, to some other female believers, to two

disciples who were walking in the country, and to Peter. To the fact itself there was no human witness. The exact period therefore that His Body lay in the grave, while His Soul was proclaiming His death to the disembodied spirits in Hades, is unknown to us, but was one entire day, the Saturday; it must have been left in the sepulchre by Joseph and Nicodemus shortly before sunset on the Friday evening, and continued there the first part of Sunday morning. No one therefore can tell the hour when Jesus broke the bands of death; it must however have been *very early*, and before *the rising of the sun*; for the women who set out for the tomb while it *was yet dark*, and *as it began to dawn*, found it open, and were informed by Angels that Jesus was risen. There had been an earthquake, and an Angel of the Lord had come down from heaven, and sat upon the stone which had closed it, and which he rolled back, that the risen Saviour might leave His temporary sepulchre. Mary Magdalene was the first person honoured with a sight of the Lord, and soon after He showed Himself to the other women; so that they proclaimed the joyful tidings which revived their hopes to the Apostles themselves; and they might be distinguished by this preference, because the women stood by at the crucifixion, and were then designing to pay Him the only remaining mark of respect and affection in their power; whereas the men, with the single exception of St. John, had forsaken Him in the hour of His distress. The women were many, and their reports are preserved, not with contradictions, but with variations, each Evangelist recording what best suited his own object in writing, or seemed necessary to supply the omission of the others. Their minute discrepancies have been exaggerated by infidels; nor is it of so much importance, as they would wish us to believe, to reconcile them, for it is not upon the testimony of these women that we receive the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, but on that of the Apostles, and of the Holy *Spirit of Truth*,

which He *hath sent from the Father*, and who, on the day of Pentecost, and on many other occasions, *testified of and glorified Him*. The chief use of it seems to be, the refutation of the fabricated story of the guard; for the Apostles were convinced by the Lord's appearance to themselves, and the women are not reckoned in the Acts, or in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, among the witnesses of the Resurrection. Yet their reports, by which the first rays of hope glanced upon the minds of the Apostles themselves, however imperfect and confused they might be, seemed to them worthy of lasting remembrance, and have been consequently committed to writing. Such discrepancies, instead of diminishing, increase the credibility of the Evangelists, for they prove their scrupulous accuracy; and Grotius, who has discussed them, shows that, though in some circumstances they seem not to correspond, there is no absolute diversity. The events were nearly coincident, or rapidly succeeded each other; and they are told briefly, each Evangelist adding some particular, and therefore it is not surprising that harmonists have pursued different methods of reducing them into one narrative. Many of these have succeeded so far, as to show, that there are no characters of disagreement in the facts recorded; but it is generally allowed, that the most satisfactory scheme is that of West, which assumes, that the women went in two parties to the sepulchre, and consequently that there was an appearance of Angels to both. This scheme Doddridge candidly acknowledges that he prefers to his own, and the Diatessaron here deserts that in the Archbishop's Harmony, to follow this, which I here give, as exhibited with some variation by Townson. "Mary Magdalene," he says, "is mentioned by Matthew, Mark, and John, as going early to the sepulchre on the first day of the week. Matthew adds the other Mary; Mark joins with her, Mary the mother of James and Salome, and his context will not allow us to suppose that there was any other person of the party. Luke,

who speaks of a greater number of women, *those who came with Him from Galilee*, has so guarded his account of them, as not to include the three just mentioned; and what is said by him of the Angels that appeared to them, and their behaviour at the tomb, is totally unlike any thing that is related of the two Maries and Salome. If these things can be made to appear evident, from a comparison of the Evangelists, we must in justice to them consider the women as going successively in a less and a larger company; and this arrangement corresponds exactly with the history of that memorable morning, embraces all the circumstances related of the women and the angels, and unites the whole into one intelligible and consistent history." For the superiority of this hypothesis, and for an answer to objections, I must refer to Townson and West, and to the Chronological Arrangement of the Bible by Townsend, who, with his usual diligence and ability, has condensed into a small compass whatever was required to enable the reader to form his own judgment. Macknight, however, not satisfied with this scheme, suggests another of his own: still he agrees with them in making Peter run twice to the tomb without seeing more than the linen clothes, first in company with John, (John xx.) and secondly alone, (Luke xxiv.)

I will state nearly in their own words the two schemes, but to form a just comparison, the reader must have a Harmony before him, or bear in mind all the particulars of the four narratives. It is also desirable, that he should have a correct notion of the sepulchre, which did not resemble one of our altar tombs, into which a body is let down, but was an upright excavation. Many such may be still seen in Asia Minor, near the ruins of Greek cities; and the Gospels themselves afford an example of their being used for the purpose of a dwelling, in the narrative of the Gadarene demoniacs. As a stone was rolled against the tomb of Joseph, we may

conclude that it was yet unfinished. It is described as consisting of an anti-chamber nine feet square, from which a passage, not exceeding three in height and breadth, leads into the inner room, which is eight by seven; but all must have been somewhat larger, before they were cased and floored with white marble by the Empress Helena. I assume the reputed sepulchre to be the real one; and those who of late dispute this ancient tradition, are unable to propose any other. But even they will allow, that such a division is common in ancient sepulchres, and existed probably in that of our Lord, wherever they may place it.

According to Macknight, "1. The two Maries go out to see the sepulchre on *Saturday evening* about sun-set, as soon as the Sabbath was over; but are turned back by an earthquake and storm. 2. Very early on the Lord's day morning *all the women went out together*, and arrive before sun-rise. Mary Magdalene runs into the city to tell the Apostles that the body was taken away. 3. A while after she is gone, the women at the sepulchre see a vision of angels, then run to the city. 4. As the women enter the city, Mary Magdalene, with Peter and John, are coming out of the Apostles' lodging to go to the sepulchre; but *taking a different street*, they miss the women. 5. Peter and John, having searched the sepulchre, depart, but Mary Magdalene stays behind. 6. As Peter and John are entering the city, the company of women leave the Apostles' lodging (having a message to Peter) along with some of the brethren, who were dispatched to examine the truth of their information. They wished to see Peter, but *miss* him and his companions, who are coming in by a different street. 7. The brethren, running faster than the women, leave them behind; they follow as quickly as they can, till Jesus meets them. The brethren arrive at the garden just as Mary Magdalene is leaving the sepulchre, after having seen the Lord; but they do not meet with

her, because they go in by a different walk. 8. She running towards the city comes up to the company of women just as Jesus leaves them. They then all proceed in a body to the city. 9. While they are talking or returning, the brethren, who had gone forward to the sepulchre, see the angels there. They instantly depart in great haste ; arrive at the Apostles' lodging, and tell what they had seen, in the hearing of the two disciples, who set out for Emmaus, before the Magdalene and the other women come up. 10. After their departure, the women arrive in a body. 11. On hearing their report, Peter runs to the sepulchre a second time ; and as he returns, he also sees his Lord. 12. In the evening, the disciples arrive from Emmaus, and while they are telling their story, Jesus Himself appears. If the space of the time should appear to be too short for so many journeys to the tomb, we may reply, that the period was longer than many suppose. If that year the passover fell late in April, the sun must have risen to the inhabitants of Jerusalem about twenty-three minutes after five ; and the dawn would have been about three. At Emmaus the disciples observe, that it was towards evening, that is, three o'clock ; for had it been later they could not have returned time enough to have been present when Jesus showed Himself the first day of the week, which ended at *sun-set* ; and as it was not eight miles from Jerusalem, it must have been late in the morning when they set out."

According to Townson, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary set out as soon as it began to dawn on the Sunday morning, calling upon Salome in their way ; and before they reached the tomb, the Saviour had arisen ; and an Angel rolled inward the stone that had closed it, and sat upon it within the anti-room. The guard fled in dismay ; and soon after, about sun-rise, the Women drew near. They had expressed a doubt as to their ability to remove the stone, for

it was very great ; but perceiving that it was gone, they were alarmed ; and Mary Magdalene, surmising that the body had been taken away, without staying to inquire further, ran back to inform Peter and John, leaving her two friends to watch till her return. After a pause, they ventured into the outer chamber, and saw the Angel, who encouraged them, saying, *Fear not ye* ; intimating thereby, that it was for the enemies and persecutors, not for the friends, of Jesus to be alarmed ; announcing to them for their consolation, the un hoped-for though predicted fact, *He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Tell His disciples and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee ; there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.* On the night of His apprehension, Jesus had comforted the eleven, with these last words, *After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.* The sending therefore of these words to them on the morning of the resurrection, was a clear token from Christ Himself that it was His message. If they did not attend to it as such, the fault was not that of the gracious Sender. The mention of Peter's name in particular (for after his three denials, he might doubt if his Master intended to include him under the title of Disciple) was an instance of special kindness ; at the same time it was calculated to remind him of the prediction of those denials, and to put him upon reflecting, whether the same Lord who had foretold his fall, might not with equal truth have spoken of His own Resurrection. The Angel invited them to enter into the inner room, that his report might be confirmed by the sight of the clothes in which Jesus had been wrapt ; but they withdrew in haste, with mixed and indescribable sensations of fear and joy ; and were unable from agitation to communicate their tidings to the disciples if they met them ; but they might take another road, [as suggested by Mac-knight]. Peter and John, on learning from Mary Magdalene what had happened, hastened to the sepulchre ; but the



latter, probably from being younger, outran the former. Peter, however, was the first to enter, and examine the inner room, and his example was followed by John; and when that beloved Disciple reflected upon the orderly manner in which the linen clothes were arranged, faith in his Lord's Resurrection dawned in his breast, and he became entitled to the blessing of those *who have not seen, and yet have believed*. At the same time he candidly acknowledges his slowness of heart, in not understanding from the Scriptures that Christ must rise from the dead. Peter also, we may infer from his second visit to the tomb, had at least some hope.

The Disciples then *went away again to their home*. Mary Magdalene on her return stood without, but near the tomb, weeping; and as she stooped down to look into it, she saw two Angels sitting, the one where the head, the other where the feet, of Jesus had lain. Soon after she turned back, and saw Jesus Himself standing, whom she mistook for the gardener, till at the sound of His well-known voice, she recognised Him. Her first impulse was to embrace Him; but He checked her, saying, *Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God*. By the first clause He seems to mean no more than that she should not at present detain Him, as she would have other opportunities of seeing Him before His ascension; because, soon after, He suffered Salome and the other Mary and herself to hold Him by the feet and worship Him. The latter clause is an allusion to His own words in the last discourse He had had with them, to which none were privy but themselves; and therefore, like the message of the Angel, it offered evidence distinct from the testimony of those who reported it. Jesus next showed Himself to her companions, and repeated the Angel's information, that the

believers should see Him in Galilee, with the endearing substitution for Disciples of the word Brethren.

146. *The Guard bear testimony before the Rulers to the fact of the Resurrection.* Matt. xxviii. 12—16.

The first party of women were hastening to inform the Apostles, when the soldiers came to the Chief Priests to exculpate themselves by confession of the truth. According to Townson, the guard had departed before their arrival. I think, however, that they must have seen them lying in a trance, *like dead men*, for the Angel seems to institute a comparison between them, by saying, *Fear not ye, for I know ye seek Jesus who was crucified*. The Council was immediately summoned, and the result of their deliberation was, to give the soldiers a large sum of money, on the condition that they would spread abroad a rumour, that the Disciples of Jesus had come by night, and taken an opportunity to steal away His body while they were fallen asleep. This was to confess themselves guilty of a capital offence; a promise therefore was given, that if it should reach the Governor, means should be found to pacify him, and save them from punishment. An impartial hearer, however, would find much in the rumour to excite suspicion. Had this been the intention of the disciples, they might have accomplished it the day before, when the watch was not yet set; they were few, friendless, and dispirited, and in expectation of arrest themselves; for when they met together, they fastened the doors for fear; the time was the Passover, when the moon was full, and the town was crowded; and the Sepulchre was just without the walls, and open to observation. Could the whole guard, probably of sixty men, be sleeping, and if sleeping, were they competent

witnesses? If awake, could they be overpowered by persons so weak and few, or bribed by those so poor? It might also be asked, Why were not the accused examined, and why was no notice taken of the avowed misconduct of the soldiers? But the Council could not themselves believe the story, to which they endeavoured to give currency; for when afterwards the Apostles were brought before them twice, and boldly declared, that Him whom they had put to death as a malefactor, God had raised, they did not venture to make this charge. A minute examination of particulars will also show the extreme improbability of the report. We know that there was a great stone rolled to the mouth of the grave, which could not have been removed without noise, and it would have taken more time than the disciples could spare to lay aside in order the grave clothes of our Lord, which we conclude was done by the ministering Angels.

147. *The second party of Women visit the sepulchre.*

*Luke xxiv. 1—12.*

Meanwhile a more numerous party of Women arrived at the sepulchre, of which Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, was the chief. The delays incident to their assembling from different parts of the city, and the slowness of their progress with the spices, so retarded them, that the Maries and Salome were out of sight before their arrival. These also observed that the tomb was open, but did not express any astonishment, supposing that some of their friends had anticipated them, and removed the stone. When, however, upon examination they could no where discover the body, they were perplexed, till two Angels showed themselves, saying, *Why seek ye the living among the dead?* and reminding them, that

the Lord had foretold His Resurrection as well as His Crucifixion. They withdrew to report what they had seen and heard ; but, though the other company of women had likewise communicated a message from angels, so desponding were the Apostles, and so slow to understand the Prophecies, and this their accomplishment, that they believed them not, regarding both accounts as no better than *idle tales*. Still the report had sufficient weight with Peter to make him run a second time to the tomb. The Angels, however, were not visible to him, and as he saw no more than he had seen upon the first visit, he departed wondering ; unable to reconcile the report with appearances, and at a loss what to think, till it pleased Christ to remove his suspense by appearing to him. Had his Master shown Himself to any of the other men first, Peter might have thought his repentance ineffectual, and have been plunged into despair. No particulars of the appearance have been recorded ; but it was previous to that to the whole assembled body, and the first vouchsafed to any *man* ; and we conclude, that it took place after the two disciples had set out for Emmaus, a distance of about eight miles, it being evident that they were ignorant of it till their return.

148. *Christ converses with two of His disciples, who are walking to Emmaus, and makes Himself known to them, and immediately after disappears. Luke xxiv. 13—35.*

The cause of this walk on a day apparently so inopportune is not recorded, and we know the name only of one of the two, Cleopas the brother-in-law of the Virgin, and the father of the Apostles James and Jude. Mark (xvi. 12.) seems to allude to it, though he does not enter into particulars, when he says no more than that Jesus *appeared unto two of them*

as they went into the country, in another form,  $\mu\omicron\sigma\phi\tilde{\eta}$ , or dress. Mary of Magdala had taken Him for a gardener; He had now the appearance, we may suppose, of a traveller. They were conversing on the subject nearest their hearts; and that they might open their thoughts more freely, and afford Him better opportunity for instructing them, *their eyes were holden that they should not know Him*. Having interrogated them, He reproved them for want of faith and misconception of the Scriptures; and then, *beginning at Moses*, expounded to them in order the predictions and types *concerning Himself*, showing that the Messiah must suffer before He entered into glory. During this conversation they drew nigh to Emmaus, and, unwilling to lose so instructive and interesting a companion, pressed Him to stay, observing, that it was advancing towards sun-set, and that *the day was far spent*. He yielded to their solicitation, and their frugal repast being ready, blessed the loaf, and gave it to them. His undertaking this office, and performing it in His accustomed manner, probably undeceived them, for they then instantly recognised in this mysterious stranger their lamented Master. He gave them no opportunity of showing their feelings, for He vanished out of their sight. The phrase  $\acute{\alpha}\varphi\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma \epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$ , which also occurs in the Greek poets and historians, for an abrupt and sudden departure, is rendered in the margin of our Bible, *He ceased to be seen of them*; there is therefore no necessity for supposing with some commentators, that His body was essentially different from what it had been before His resurrection; and we know from His passing unseen through the multitude at Nazareth, that He had possessed previously the power of eluding the sight. Still we are led to conclude from the language used on other occasions, that after His resurrection He was henceforward only visible when He pleased. On missing Him, they immediately rose from table, and hastened back to

Jerusalem to communicate the joyful intelligence to the brethren. They found them privately assembled with the doors bolted, from apprehension of the rulers, seemingly after supper; and on gaining admittance, were informed, that *the Lord was risen indeed, and had appeared unto Simon*. They then related His appearance to themselves; and while they were yet speaking, He Himself stood *in the midst of them*, and saluted them, saying, *Peace be unto you*.

149. *Christ shows Himself the same evening to His Apostles, who, with the exception of Thomas, are assembled together.*  
*Luke xxiv. 36—43. John xx. 21—23.*

Their first impression was alarm, for they supposed that it was not Himself, but a *Spirit*. Several of the Fathers, and some modern commentators, imagine, that the door was still fastened, and that Christ, from His rendering Himself visible and invisible at pleasure, passed through it. This, however, is not mentioned, nor is it necessary, since He might order the door to open to admit Him, as an angel did afterwards that of Peter's prison; (Acts xii.) and this supposition is much more in harmony with the economy of Miracles so remarkable in the Divine government, under which whatever of this kind is necessary is effected, but never any thing superfluous. They forget that the proof of His resurrection, and the hope of our own, rest upon the identity of His crucified and raised body. This He Himself seemed anxious to demonstrate to His disciples, saying, *It is I Myself*, and, *a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have*. He offered them all the evidence that could be given; He showed them the marks that crucifixion had left upon His hands and feet; He invited them to handle Him; He even ate in their presence. To this very evidence St. John afterwards appeals in his first Epistle; *We declare unto you*

*that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life.* And his writing to confute the Gnostics, explains why he relates more circumstantially than St. Luke, the proofs which our Saviour gave of His having resumed His real body. Bishop Horsley supports the contrary opinion, but not I think with his usual success. The only argument appears to be Christ's disappearance at pleasure, and the *assumed* fact, that because it is said the doors had been fastened, He must have passed through them. But the reason assigned by the Evangelist is fear of the Jewish authorities, and they must have been previously opened to admit the two disciples on their return from Emmaus. Bishop Sherlock even opposes it, as an infidel objection; and the fourth Article of our Church maintains, that our Lord rose and ascended with the same body, in which He was incarnate, "with flesh, bones, and all things pertaining to the perfection of man's nature." Not that the word 'same' is to be interpreted so rigidly as if it underwent no alteration. It is in substance the same; but we learn from the Epistle to the Philippians, (iii. 21.) that it is now *glorious*, and that *the vile body* of His people will by His energy be *fashioned like unto it*. I only mean, that, however beautified and adapted for higher occupations, it is still, and will ever continue to be, material. He had addressed them, and eaten with them; but not content with appealing to all their senses, as He had expounded the *oracles of God* to the two with whom He had walked, so He now reminded them all that His sufferings had been predicted in the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, and *opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures*.

The joy of the assembly was complete, for they could not resist the evidence of their senses. The object, therefore, of Christ being attained, He withdrew; but first He renewed His appointment of them as His ambassadors to the world,

and breathed upon them, as a pledge of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, which they were to receive, in order to qualify them for their commission, the noblest and the most important that had ever been delegated to man. Thus did our Lord show Himself four times at least during that ever-memorable first day of the week, on which, by rising as *the First-born from the dead*, He through death destroyed *him that had the power of death*, bruising the *head*, or vital part of His enemy, who could only bruise His *heel*. *This is*, as the Psalmist (cxviii.) prophesied, preeminently *the day which Jehovah has made*, and Christians should say with him, *we will rejoice and be glad in it*. It has been designated ever since as the Lord's, and has superseded the seventh as the day of public worship, and of rest from secular business and diversion, according to Isaiah's prediction, that *the new creation*, that is, the restoration of man to holiness and the Divine image, procured through the death and resurrection of the Saviour, would be commemorated in preference to that inferior work, the creation of the material world and its inhabitants. (lxx. 17, 18.)

150. *After the interval of a week, Christ appears to all the eleven, and Thomas, who had not believed the report of the rest, now acknowledges Him for his Lord and his God. Mark xvi. John xx.*

Christ seems to have left His disciples to their own reflections for a week; for it was not till the next Lord's day (to anticipate a term that was soon substituted for that of the first day) that we hear of another visit. In the interval, they and Cleopas were engaged in communicating information of the event to the remaining believers; but they found many of them as little disposed to credit it, as they themselves had been; among whom was one of the Apostles, Thomas,



whom some cause unrecorded had kept from their late meeting. Their unanimous assurance of the fact was unavailing; and it is supposed that the resurrection of the body was with him the insuperable difficulty. "He might deem it not impossible," says Origen against Celsus, (ii.) "that the soul of a departed person might be seen; but he could not believe that Jesus had risen again with the same body; and therefore he said not, Except I shall see *Him*, I *shall*<sup>a</sup> not believe; but, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger on the print of the nails, and put<sup>b</sup> my hand upon His side."

The following Sunday morning they were assembled in the same place as before, and employed the same precaution of fastening the entrance, when Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saluted them. Then turning to Thomas, who was now with them, He offered Him the very criterion he had required; and His speech showed at the same time His knowledge of his incredulity; for He added, *Be not faithless, but believing*. Thomas probably did not stay to make the offered examination; he felt conviction, and addressed Jesus, calling Him both his Lord and his God; his Lord who had been crucified, and who by His resurrection had shown Himself to be God. Those who deny our Saviour's Divinity are forced to wrest this reply, as they do other texts from their obvious meaning, and put upon it a sense, which probably few of them know had been brought forward by an early heretic, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and condemned in the fifth Council, A.D. 553. There are still Christians who say, that it is no more than an exclamation of astonishment, or at most of thanks to the Father; but this does not suit the

<sup>a</sup> The authorized version *will not believe*, according to the modern use of the tense, conveys the notion, not of inability, but of unwillingness to believe.

<sup>b</sup> Βάλλω, in the same verse, is rendered both *put* and *thrust*. The first appears to be most accurate, and ἐπὶ might as well have been translated *on* as *into*.

idiom of the language, which requires it to be an affirmation<sup>c</sup>; and the Evangelist informs us, that it was spoken to Jesus, who took it as an acknowledgment of conviction, *Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed; happy are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.* A happiness limited at that time to the beloved disciple who records the saying, but modestly leaves it to the reader to apply. How encouraging has been this declaration to millions, who have since believed upon testimony! and such no doubt it will still prove to multitudes till the second advent of our Lord. It may well check any repining that might arise in the hearts of those who would have delighted to have seen Him in the flesh. And they know that this happiness is not denied to them, it is only deferred, and shall be enjoyed without interruption by all who now believe and obey Him, when *they shall see*, as He is, Him whom they adore, and faith shall be exchanged for knowledge. It is remarkable that this is the only explicit confession of Christ's proper Divinity from a disciple, and it is not rebuked but approved.

151. *Christ shows Himself on a mountain in Galilee to the disciples. Matt. xxviii. 16—18. And again on the shore of the lake to seven of them who had been fishing. John xxi. 1—24.*

The next appearance of Christ was not, like the former ones, unexpected, but by appointment. It must have been of great notoriety, and was probably witnessed by all believers who found it practicable to attend. The time is conjectured to have been, like His former appearances, on a Sunday, and

<sup>c</sup> *Thou art* being understood, an ellipsis which is required here as in other passages; for example, in Psalm v. 3. and St. John xiii. 13. Hales has satisfied me that Middleton errs, with many earlier critics, in maintaining that these nominatives are to be taken as vocatives, because Wetstein has proved that the respective articles of these cases are never confounded.

that the second after the day of the Resurrection. Matthew, passing over all the former, except that to the women at the sepulchre, directs our attention to this, which is thought to be the one recorded by Paul, at which, he tells us, above five hundred brethren were present; the greater part of whom were alive, when he wrote to the Corinthians (1 Ep. xv. 6.) nearly thirty years after. But what a small company was this, compared with the thousands who must have heard His discourses, and witnessed His miracles! The spot selected was a mountain in Galilee, according to tradition, Tabor. In that division of Palestine He had principally resided; and at that distance from Jerusalem the disciples might assemble with less fear of the Jewish rulers. Here He was seen in an open space and light, and received their homage. Some, we are candidly informed, doubted, but we cannot suppose any of the eleven, who had been instructed to meet Him there; and yet, if we had not the additional information of St. Paul, we should have concluded that no other persons were present. It must have been some of the five hundred that doubted; yet these too, it seems, as He approached, and they had a nearer view of Him, were satisfied. All uncertainty must indeed have ceased, when they heard so well-known a voice reviving their spirits, and raising their hopes with these encouraging words, *All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.*

His appearance to seven disciples at the lake of Galilee is placed by some Harmonists before the preceding one, but seems to have followed it; for Jesus in His discourse appears to take leave of Peter, and the Apostles had returned to their homes and original occupation. We may naturally place it on the ensuing Sunday, and the day after the Sabbath was a likely one to want provisions. Five only of the persons present are named; and if the prevalent opinion, that Nathaniel is the same as Bartholomew, be true, they were

all Apostles, and Cleophas will be the only man not of their number mentioned, as having seen Christ after the Resurrection. The reason is, that the Evangelists wish to fix our attention upon those who were chosen before of God to be the witnesses of that fact. Thus when the Eleven assembled immediately after the Ascension to fill up the vacancy occasioned by the death of the traitor Judas, the capability of being a witness of the Resurrection is the point insisted on in his successor; and when Paul, who had not known Christ in the flesh, was to be added to the number as an Apostle, *not by men, but by Him and God the Father*, he was favoured with the sight of our Lord in glory, and appeals to the fact as evidence of his Apostleship. *Have I not seen Jesus Christ?* (2 Cor. ix. 1.) and, *Last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.* (1 Cor. xv. 8.)

They had been fishing the whole night, but in vain. At the dawn of day Jesus was standing on the shore, and asked if they had any fish, as if He had been desirous of purchasing some. He advised them to cast out on the right side, and notwithstanding they did not recognise Him, though He addressed them affectionately as dear children, yet they followed His direction; and their compliance was rewarded with such success, that they could not, from its weight, draw up the net, but were obliged to drag it to land. The number they caught was a hundred and fifty-three large fishes, and the sale of them would contribute to their temporary support. There must have been a reason for this specification, which no commentator seems to have ascertained. The explanation most satisfactory to my mind is the suggestion, that as it appears from Oppian's Poem on Fishing, that this is the precise number of species then known, the enumeration was designed to indicate, that in their new vocation, the Apostles should catch men of all nations, ranks, and characters. The beloved disciple, astonished at this wonderful draught, and recollecting the similar one

after which Jesus had called them to a regular attendance on Him, exclaimed, *It is the Lord!* nor is it surprising that this success, following the direction of a stranger after a night of unproductive toil, should recall to the recollection of the beloved Disciple that memorable one which led to their both giving up their employment at the bidding of Jesus, and becoming His regular attendants. Still there are in these miracles, as in the twice feeding with an inadequate supply of provisions a multitude in a desert, differences as well as resemblances. Augustine<sup>g</sup> discovers a symbolical meaning in almost every particular. We may not be satisfied with all the details of his interpretation, yet it is edifying, and may be the spiritual improvement which it was designed that we should draw out of these miracles. In the first draught, he sees a figure of the Church as it now is; in the second, its condition at the end of the world. In the first, they *enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake*; so all were not secured within them. In the second, the hundred fifty and three were great; *and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken*. Then the Apostles *filled both the ships*, still on the troubled lake; now *Simon Peter drew the net to land*, on the safe and quiet shore of eternity. Then a great multitude was caught, we may presume, as in the Parable, (Matt. xiii. 47.) *of every kind*, and as there *the bad*, that is, those not fit for food, they would *cast away*, here the hundred and fifty-three designate the fixed definite number of the elect. Upon John's exclaiming, *It is the Lord!* Peter leapt into the lake, that he might be the first to salute Him; and his accustomed eagerness was probably stimulated by the desire of acknowledging his sin, and thanking his Master for forgiving him; still in his haste he did not forget to mark respect, by putting on his upper tunic, which he had thrown off as well as his cloak<sup>h</sup>.

<sup>g</sup> As quoted from various passages by Trench in his Notes on the Miracles.

<sup>h</sup> Γυμνός, *naked*, like our *undressed* and *dressed*, is not to be taken literally

On the shore they found a fire already kindled; fish broiling, and bread provided. The stranger ordered them to bring some of the fish now taken, and invited them to break their fast, when He was recognised as at Emmaus in the act of dividing the loaf. Peter's case required especial notice, that he and future believers might derive benefit from his fall and recovery. When forewarned by his Master, that notwithstanding his declaration, *I am ready to go with Thee into prison and to death*, he should thrice deny that he even knew Him; he with his constitutional ardour and vehemence had replied, *Although all shall be offended, yet will not I*. Jesus, to humble and to prove him, now enquired if he loved Him more than these, and as he had thrice denied, the question was put to him thrice. Whitby's interpretation, *Lovest thou Me more than these*—boats and nets? that is, "wouldest thou rather pursue thy business or mine, wouldest thou rather catch fish than men?" is a sense that ought no doubt to be ever present to the mind of a minister, but it is not so suitable to the context as the more obvious one, *Lovest thou Me more than these*, whom I have chosen as well as thee to be my Apostles? Peter's failure had subdued his confidence; and he was consequently now content with declaring that he loved his Master, without drawing an offensive comparison between his own affection and that of the rest. Each time Jesus answered, *Tend my sheep*, or, *Feed my lambs*; and the two verbs He uses, seem to mean both government and in-

here, or in the narratives of the young man who fled from the soldiers, Mark xiv. 51. and of Saul prophesying before Samuel, 1 Sam. xix. 24. or of the command to Isaiah to walk three years barefoot and *naked*, xx. 1, 2. This word and the corresponding *nudus* are used in the same manner by Greek and Roman authors. Cincinnatus was found *naked* at the Plough, Plin. xviii. 4. and Plutarch says of Phocion, that in the country he always went *naked*. And the truth of this interpretation is proved by a passage from Eusebius, Ecc. Hist. vi. 39. in which Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, in the description of his escape from persecution, says, "I was *naked* in a linen garment."

struction. We learn from the question and reply that Love to the Saviour is the grand indispensable qualification required in Ministers of the Gospel, and that the proper evidence of this love is care of the flock committed to their charge<sup>1</sup>. The charge was here given exclusively to Peter; and from it Bellarmine deduces the doctrine, that he and his reputed successors were thereby commissioned to govern not the laity only, but also all the clergy. Had such been his Master's design, surely He would have said, *Tend my sheep, Tend my shepherds*, instead of naming sheep and lambs; the distinction not being between the clergy and the laity, but the young and old disciples, the advanced and the inexperienced believers. Such an interpretation is also at variance with the inspired testimony of him to whom the charge was addressed; who (1 Pet. v. 1—4.) exhorts elders, not as Pastor of Pastors, or Vicar of Christ, but as being *also an Elder*; and reminds them of their duty, in the same words in which he had been himself reminded; *Tend the flock of God*, acknowledging at the same time none but his Master to be *Chief Shepherd*. Peter, mortified at the repetition of the question, appealed to his Master's omniscience, *Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee*. If the charge detached from the context should appear ambiguous, it will be made clear by these words of St. Peter's Epistle, and other texts in the New Testament bearing upon the point. From them we may confidently affirm that these three repetitions of the Commission, instead of augmenting his dignity, did no more than reinstate him in his apostleship. And this he might fear he had forfeited, since he had not only like the rest deserted,

<sup>1</sup> The two Greek verbs, which mean to love, are used, but they appear to be in this place synonymous; and the Syriac version, which comes nearer even than the original to the actual words of our Lord, has only one.

but actually denied his Master. Jesus then prepared him to expect and *endure hardness* as His faithful and *good soldier*, and to prove his love not by labours and privations solely, but even by death; and this the Evangelist calls, as Jesus at the Passover had done his own, his glorifying God, a term which we may suppose that the Church adopted from this passage, when its writers applied it to other martyrdoms. In figurative language, drawn probably, according to our Lord's custom, from the act of His Apostle, who had so lately girded himself, and walked whither he would (to meet his Master), He intimated that he should die by Crucifixion, when another should gird him and carry him whither (according to flesh and blood, yet not by deliberate preference) he would not. Walking on a little, Jesus called upon Peter to follow, that by so doing, he might signify his consent to imitate Him, to be conformed to Him in His sufferings. Peter, in his first Epistle, written perhaps about thirty years later, to the brethren then *in heaviness through manifold temptations*, tells them, that they were called to suffer, *because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that they should follow His steps*; and now he literally walked in his Master's steps, to show his willingness to fulfil the reality which his walking typified. His martyrdom appears to be here referred to by St. John as a past event, and he is supposed himself to allude to this obscure prediction of it, when he declares in his second Epistle, that the Lord Jesus Christ had showed him that he must shortly put off his tabernacle. (i. 14.) Peter obeyed, and John, without waiting for a command, followed of his own accord, expressively, yet modestly, showing his readiness uncalled, to prove his love by a painful and ignominious death. This led Peter to enquire concerning the lot that awaited John, but Jesus did not think fit to gratify his curiosity, and the question might have been dictated by some dissatisfaction, that an easier end of life seemed to



be assigned to his friend. The answer evaded the question, and was misconceived; for as John long outlived the destruction of Jerusalem, to which the phrase of the Lord's coming is often applied, and was far advanced in years when he wrote his Gospel, a notion prevailed that he was never to die; but the words seem to mean no more than that in opposition to Peter's violent end, his departure out of life should be calm and peaceable. It might have been added afterwards in what we may call a second edition of his Gospel. Grotius supposes that the whole chapter was written by another John, under the sanction of the Elders of Ephesus. Hammond and others are content with assigning to them the clause, *This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true*; because it concludes with the plural number. Yet the difficulty is not thus removed, for the singular immediately follows. *There are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written*. It is also natural to ask, what weight can an anonymous *we* confer upon the testimony of a personal witness, even if we knew it to stand for Presbyters who had not witnessed the scene, and were not likely to have heard, except from St. John, of an event which had occurred in a distant country long before. It is much more reasonable to suppose that the Evangelist by *we*, as well as *I*, only designates himself, this interchange of pronouns having been common at all times, and he himself, for example, making our Lord use both in His conversation with Nicodemus, *Verily, verily I say unto thee, we speak that we know*. It is mainly this passage, according to Mr. Trench, which has caused these two Apostles to be accepted in the Church as the types of action and contemplation; Peter like the servants working for their absent Lord, John like the virgins waiting for Him. The modern German critics though inclined to doubt, do

not approve of this conjecture, and those who have advanced it allow the narrative to be true, though they ascribe it to another writer. Some of them in support of their hypothesis are pleased to treat the narrative as not of sufficient importance to have been recorded by an inspired author, but this which appears to be an after-thought, seems to be a presumptuous judging of what Scripture ought to contain; and surely we cannot allow its truth when we consider, that it contains the only miracle our Lord wrought after His Resurrection, and the prophecy of the lot of the two most eminent of His Apostles.

St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 7.) is our authority for an appearance to James, which he interposes between that to the great body of believers, and the final one to the Apostles. He does not specify to which of the two that bore the name, but it is generally supposed not to John's brother, whom *Herod slew with the sword*, but to the son of Alphæus, who was then presiding over the Church of Jerusalem. Others, which are not recorded, might have been granted in the interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension, and St. John seems to intimate that they were, when immediately after the speech to Thomas (xx. 30.) he adds, *many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book*. He ends His Gospel with a similar observation: (xxi. 25.) and it seems most reasonable to refer the last statement to the whole course of His ministry, and this to the period after the Resurrection, especially as he adds, *in the presence of His disciples*. The language of the Acts favours the same conclusion. *To whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days*. (i. 3.) Certainly but few of these visits are recorded: those only, it is suggested by West, which answered the purpose of their conviction, and are enough for ours; the others were for their instruction in the faith. Be this however as it may, and satisfactory as the evidence

afforded was, it was afforded only to friends; as St. Peter candidly states, (Acts x. 40.) *Him hath God shown openly, not to all the People, but to witnesses chosen before of God.* It may be, and has been asked, why was He not shown to all, if the identity of His person would stand the test. The most incredulous of His enemies had declared that they would believe in Him, if they might but see Him descend from the cross; and would they not much more have believed, had they seen Him the third day risen from the grave? In such a case, the choice of witnesses may be thought to bring a suspicion on their testimony, a surmise that they were chosen not by God, but by themselves and their confederates. This objection, an obvious one, which has been repeated by modern infidels, did not escape Celsus, the earliest opponent of Christianity. Though plausible upon examination, it will be found to be of no weight; for those to whom Jesus was known in His lifetime, were the only competent witnesses of His personal identity, and their number was quite sufficient; for the fact does not rest upon the testimony of the eleven Apostles, or of Paul, (1 Cor. xv. 6.) but on that of five hundred persons, most of whom were alive many years after. Even the evidence, which unbelievers call for, might not have answered the purpose, for it is well known how much the understanding is under the influence of the inclination; and in vain had a succession of Miracles (among them the restoration to life of Lazarus) been exhibited as signs, to those who were unwilling to believe. Had the evidence amounted to demonstration; had the fact of the resurrection been made as certain to their conviction as the presence of the sun to their eyes, according to the arrogant and absurd demand of a modern infidel; none truly could have contradicted it, but none (accurately speaking) could have *believed*, they must have *known it*, and certainty would have extinguished faith. To His contemporaries, then,

overpowering and irresistible evidence would have of necessity done away the moral nature of their assent, while to many of subsequent times, the national reception of this truth would have been a stumbling-block, for it would have been easy for Celsus and other adversaries to have represented it as “a state trick, a Jewish fable, a mere political contrivance.”

There was, however, another reason, which has not been sufficiently noticed, but on which alone Origen rests his reply—the unseemliness of the thing required, constituting a moral impossibility. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*; and to them alone, after the triumph of our incarnate Deity over death and hell and *him who had the power of death*, was this high privilege vouchsafed. Our Lord, therefore, now recompensed as Mediator with all power in heaven and on earth, could not renew with the world the familiar intercourse of the Son of Man. The atonement once made, the *form of a servant* was to cease. Christ was to resume His glory, and to be seen no more except as *the Only-begotten of the Father*. His appearance, accordingly, after the resurrection, was a favour granted to friends, and justly withheld from the nation, who, by their rejection of their Messiah, had proved themselves unworthy of this distinction. He had solemnly taken leave of the Jews on quitting for the last time the Temple, when He declared that they should not see Him again, till they were disposed to acknowledge Him as their King. He now opened a new commission, addressed to the whole world, and that once opened, there was no ground to demand special and particular evidence to them<sup>1</sup>. The world, He had told the Apostles, should see Him no more, *but I will see you again; your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*. It was, however, a joy tempered with

<sup>1</sup> Sherlock's Trial of the Witnesses.

reverence; there was now a more reserved dignity in His deportment, on their part a more humble and less familiar intercourse. He showed Himself to them, and even ate with them, but it was for the purpose of convincing them, that though restored to life, He had still a real body, for His time was no longer passed as heretofore in their society; they knew not His goings out and His comings in, and none of them, for instance, could say to Thomas as Nathanael did formerly to Philip, *Come and see*. On the journey to Galilee, He was not their companion, but went before them; they were not to seek Him at Capernaum, His former residence in that province, but at a *mountain where Jesus had appointed them*; and when they saw Him, they did not address Him as heretofore, but *worshipped Him*<sup>m</sup>.

152. *Jesus instructs His Apostles, who had now returned to Jerusalem, to preach Repentance and Remission of sins to all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 16—18. Luke xxiv. 44—48. Acts i. 1—9.*

The first message of Jesus to the Apostles after the resurrection was, to order them to go into Galilee. When in Galilee, He must have commanded them to return to Jerusalem, for it was in the capital that He took leave of them. At this last meeting, having opened their understandings that they might comprehend the Prophecies concerning Himself, He commanded that *Repentance and Remission of sins should be proclaimed in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*, and that *they should make disciples of them, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*; that is, into a religion, the characteristic tenet of which is Belief in the existence, offices, and operations of the Three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity, as Creator,

<sup>m</sup> Bp. Horsley, Sermon xiv. on the Evidences of our Lord's Resurrection.

Redeemer, and Sanctifier. "As long as these words shall stand in Holy Scripture as a Commandment, to persist in the endeavour, either personally, or by aiding the missionary in evangelizing the world, will be the duty of Christians, let what will be urged against it; and as long as the concluding words, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*, shall stand there as a Promise, nothing but want of faith can make us think at any time, that our labour in such undertakings can be *in vain in the Lord*." We learn from the Acts of the Apostles, that at this last meeting, though He had spoken to them so often *concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*, they were still under the influence of their carnal prejudices, from their question, *Wilt Thou, Lord, at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* His reply conveyed not the information they sought, but a reproof; *It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power*. Yet, that they might not be discouraged, He subjoined a promise, well fitted to comfort them; *Ye shall receive miraculous power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you*, and He contrasted the inferior Baptism of John *by water* with the Christian *by the Holy Ghost*, to intimate its immeasurable superiority.

This power from on high had been already bestowed upon the Twelve, and even upon the Seventy during their preparatory missions. The gift is now renewed, and this promise of the Father of the Holy Ghost in His extraordinary operations is thus particularized by St. Mark: *These signs shall follow them that believe:*

*In My Name they shall cast out devils.*

*They shall speak with new tongues.*

*They shall take up serpents.*

*And if they drink any deadly draught, it shall not hurt them.*

*They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

<sup>n</sup> Archdeacon Bather's Sermon before the Church Missionary Society, 1833.

In the original commission to the Apostles was added,

*Cleanse the lepers.*

*Raise the dead.*

The Evangelist concludes with informing us, that *They went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with the signs following.* St. Paul subdivides some of these gifts and adds others, when he enumerates to the Corinthians, (1 Cor. xii.) 1. *the word of wisdom*; 2. *the word of knowledge*; 3. *faith*; 4. *the gifts of healing*; 5. *the working of miracles*; 6. *prophecy*; 7. *discerning of spirits*; 8. *divers kinds of tongues*; and 9. *the interpretation of them*: and at the close of the chapter he specifies those to whom *that one and the selfsame Spirit divided them severally as He willed: first, Apostles; secondarily, Prophets; thirdly, Teachers; after that, Miracles; then, 5. Gifts of healing, 6. Helps, 7. Governments, 8. Diversities of tongues.* Of these the last is in some respects the most remarkable. Our Lord Himself, as a *Minister of the Circumcision* within the limits of the Holy Land, had no occasion to employ it; but it is the most satisfactory, because it acts equally upon a whole assembly, and does not admit of being counterfeited. Such credentials were indispensable on the introduction of a new Religion, opposed to the feelings and prejudices of all mankind, and hostile alike to the superstition, power, knowledge, and philosophy of the age; but they are no longer needed, when power, knowledge, and philosophy, have passed over to Christianity; and Missionaries can appeal to the miracles preserved in the written word in successive generations, which ushered in the new Dispensation, as it had the Mosaic, and which have convinced thousands, and triumphed over the attacks of Sophists and Scorners. The Romanist indeed maintains, that the gift of Miracles is one of the notes of a true Church; and in conformity with this view, the Pope from time to time canonizes those in whose favour evidence

of this test of being Saints is proved to the satisfaction of the appointed judges. The miracles, however, which they adduce are of a very different character from those recorded in the Scriptures. Like those of the apocryphal gospels, they are objectionable, or at best frivolous, carrying with them their own confutation; and even when of an edifying character, (which is not the rule but the exception,) we should anticipate from them not benefit, but injury to religion, as their tendency would be to encourage spiritual pride, by unduly exalting the persons so favoured in the estimation of themselves and others. In countries where Christianity already prevails, there appears to be no adequate reason for their continuance. The Apostle himself, as eminent in these gifts as in the natural qualifications for his office, when he tells the Corinthians that *tongues are for a sign to them that believe not*, leads us to the conclusion, that miraculous gifts granted to the first preachers of the Gospel to cooperate with them, would be withdrawn as soon as preachers could prevail without them. Whatever be the reason, we know it as a fact, from the confession of Xavier the Jesuit, who has been called "the Apostle of the Indies," and the testimony of Protestant propagators of the Faith in Africa, India, and the islands of the Pacific Ocean, that this supernatural aid is no longer granted. And the modern Missionary, who having attained, not by intuition, but by diligent study, a foreign tongue, preaches to an attentive congregation of New Zealanders, whom he found cannibals, or to the Hindoos of Chrishnagar or Tinnevely, who lately worshipped "stocks and stones," has no need to regret that miraculous power has been denied to them, since the conversion of fierce savages and haughty Brahmins into humble and moral Christians, without the aid of these extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, will bring others to *worship God, and to report that God is in them of a truth*. Our own ancestors, and the other northern nations,



whether of Gothic or Slavonic origin, have been converted within the period of authentic history by zealous preachers, who had no attainments of a higher nature than those possessed by our own Clergy, and were not only destitute of the many advantages which increasing civilization has given the latter, but had no Bible to communicate to their converts, or to strengthen and purify their own faith. Miracles, I apprehend, had ceased when Tertullian, in his Apology in the third century, could write, "We are but of yesterday, and yet we crowd your cities, we garrison your forts, fight in your armies, fill your provinces, throng your assemblies, and swarm in all the divisions of this Metropolis; we abound in the court, in the camp, in the forum, in the senate-house. In short, we leave you only your temples. We could ruin you only by dividing from you, and retiring into some remote corner of the world;" and even there, he might have added, we should have found brethren; for Justin Martyr, about a century and a half before, had declared that there were no people, not even those ignorant of agriculture and dwelling in tents, among whom prayers were not offered up in the name of the crucified Jesus to the Father and Creator of all. And even these gifts, when poured out in full abundance upon the Church, were not so efficacious as many have imagined. Addressed not to the reason but to the senses, they served indeed to secure attention, and subdued some rougher minds inaccessible to the winning eloquence of heavenly Truth. They accomplished the conversion of the three thousand of the day of Pentecost, but it was only in part; for though these were *amazed* by the believers speaking in languages previously unknown to them, they were also *pricked in their heart* by the matter of Peter's discourse. *A great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken*, brought the Jailor of Philippi trembling to Paul to ask, *What must I do to be saved?* and Paul himself had been struck down to the

earth by a *light from heaven*; but the Beræans *received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so*, without any miracle. The Treasurer of Queen Candace was convinced by the interpretation of Isaiah's celebrated prediction, and Lydia's *heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things* (not done, but) *spoken by Paul*. Those who are disposed to attribute the whole success of the Apostles to their supernatural endowments, and in consequence to underrate, and by their representations dishearten, modern Missionaries, should weigh these instances, and consider the contrast that the New Testament exhibits to us in the Churches of Rome and Corinth. The latter, so abundant in these powers, required to be controlled by the Apostle, lest in their assemblies unbelievers should say they were mad; and they were *carnal, having envying and strife, and were puffed up*, though they tolerated in their communion a member guilty of such sin *as was not so much as named among the Gentiles*. The former, to whom *no spiritual gift* had been imparted, had its *Faith spoken of throughout the whole world*. These miraculous gifts appear to have been gradually withdrawn, and there has been much discussion respecting the period when they ceased; but to me it seems most reasonable to suppose, that though granted by the Holy Spirit in the first age to men and women, the Apostles alone had the privilege of communicating them to others. Adopting this conclusion, it could have outlasted the first age only by a single generation, and we may, in the language of Gibbon, (chap. xv.) limit this gift of supernatural powers to "that happy period of the primitive Church, comparatively exempt from error and deceit;" the age of the Apostles and of the first succession of Apostolical Fathers.

Our Missionaries should remember, that *Baptism* as well as *Teaching* was comprehended in the original commission to

the Apostles. Roman Catholic Priests have been accused of administering this Sacrament hastily and indiscreetly, and so of having introduced unworthy members into the Church; it may be feared that our Ministers from anxiety to avoid this serious evil, have been too slow to admit their converts to all the privileges of believers. Baptism would of course entitle the Catechumen to partake of "the Holy Communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ," and without considering the benefits we might expect them to derive from these "sure witnesses and effectual signs of Grace and God's good will," a formal and public renunciation of Idolatry and declaration of their Belief, must have a natural tendency to strengthen their conviction, and to preserve them from relapsing into heathenism. Certainly the converts of the Apostles passed at once from conviction to Baptism. The converts of the day of Pentecost, before that day had closed, had sealed by this pledge their adherence to their new faith. The Eunuch pressing for Baptism, was assured that he might, if he believed with all his heart that Jesus the Christ was the Son of God; and the Jailor of Philippi heard but one discourse, and that probably not a long one, when he was baptized, *he and all his straightway*.

153. *The Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven, and His sitting down there on the right hand of God.*  
*Mark xvi. 19. Luke xxiv. 50—53. Acts i. 4—11.*

Jesus had now fulfilled all the designs of His mission. He had offered Himself upon the cross as the sacrifice for sin, *having nailed to it the handwriting of ordinances that was against us*, and having *triumphed on it over death*, and *him who had the power of death, that is, the Devil*, and by an abode upon earth of forty days, He had given His disciples

sufficient opportunity to assure themselves of the fulfilment of His declaration in His prayer to His Father, *I have glorified Thee upon earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.* There was no reason, therefore, why He should prolong His stay, and it was necessary, that, as *our High Priest*, He should *enter into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*, and to take possession of His mediatorial throne. He had also, *having spoiled Principalities and Powers, to lead captivity captive, and to receive gifts for men*, the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, to enable the Apostles to establish Christianity, and the ordinary but more precious ones for the edification of believers in all generations. He had both before and since His death forewarned His disciples of His Departure; and lest they might suppose, when they heard of His Resurrection, that He meant to associate with them as formerly, He sent this message to them by Mary Magdalene, *I ascend unto My Father, My God.*

He now led them out, therefore, to their accustomed place of resort, the mount of Olives, and, proceeding as far as Bethany, Blessed them. In the act of blessing them, a cloud received Him out of their sight, and He ascended, as He had declared He should, when *He had by Himself purged our sins*, into heaven, there to *sit down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*, till the prophecy be fulfilled, (Psalm cx.) that *Jehovah shall make His enemies His footstool.* It appears from Mark and Luke, the only Evangelists that record the Ascension, that Jesus was passive in the act, consequently that it was effected by the Father. It was not sudden, but gradual, the disciples having full leisure<sup>a</sup> to observe it. The resurrection, whereby *He was declared to be the Son of God with power*, required not to be seen, because *He showed Himself alive, after His passion, by many infallible proofs*; but it was desirable that He should

<sup>a</sup> Dick on the Acts.

ascend in the sight of all the Apostles, because they would see Him no more, and could have no other evidence of the fact, while they continued on earth.

The different manner in which the writers of the New Testament refer to these two stages in our Redeemer's triumph is striking. I know no work in which the contrast is so fully brought out, as in a Village Sermon of the newly-appointed Oxford Professor of Divinity; and I introduce from it a few sentences, which will have the more weight with many of the readers of these Lectures, as they are the remarks of one, to whose instructions in Theology as well as in Classical Literature the Undergraduates of Magdalene Hall have for many years been deeply indebted.

"There are few things more remarkable, more entirely different from what we, beforehand, should naturally have expected in the Gospel History, than the way in which the Ascension is spoken of. We should have looked, after the sufferings and shame to which Christ was pleased to submit had been so fully and so particularly told, that the triumph in which all this ended would have been dwelt upon at great length. But what do we really find to be the case? The cross which He endured, the shame which He despised, of these we are told much; but of *the joy that was set before Him*, we hear very little, or rather, may we not say, in comparison we hear nothing? Of the four Gospels which the Holy Ghost caused to be written for the use of the Church, two, those of St. Matthew and St. John, make no mention at all of the Ascension. The other two Evangelists do indeed mention the fact; but that is all that we can say. They dismiss it in a single verse; and in the Acts of the Apostles, (i. 9.) we shall find one notice more of it from the pen of St. Luke; but this, again, is as short, as void of any feeling like joy, or pride, or triumph, as words could possibly be. How different is it, when (in 2 Kings ii.) we read of Elijah the

prophet being taken up! There we have much excitement and eagerness of feeling on the part of the sons of the prophets, first at Bethel, and then at Jericho: we have the waters of Jordan divided for Elijah and his successor Elisha to go over on dry ground: we have a chariot of fire, and horses of fire; and Elijah goes up by a whirlwind into Heaven! Can we account for this difference, which at first sight seems so surprising? We can. Surely we have here one instance more of the way in which the Godhead of our Saviour is taken for granted throughout the whole Gospel History. Had Jesus Christ been less than divine, His being taken up into Heaven must have claimed a fuller and a more emphatic account; but being, as He was, "very God of very God," His going back to His former glory, when His work on earth was done, was in truth a matter of course. And accordingly, the sacred Historians either do not mention it at all, or speak of it most slightly. But think for a moment of the very different way in which His Resurrection is spoken of. St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, all tell of this, and all more or less at length. And if you take the other books of the New Testament, you will find the writers constantly referring to Christ's rising again from the dead, though they speak so little and so seldom of His going up into heaven. It is as witnesses of the Resurrection that they describe themselves: it was in this capacity that they deemed it necessary to fill up the place from which Judas by transgression fell. Accordingly, of Christ's rising again they speak whenever opportunity offers: to His Ascension they very seldom call the attention. Once believe the birth of Christ, and His death, and you cannot imagine any other end to His work on earth than His going up again into Heaven. The Resurrection was the great point to dwell upon, in order to show that His manhood triumphed over death, that His human soul was not left in the unseen world among ordinary

spirits, neither did His sacred body see that corruption which is the common lot of "all who are naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam." But the Ascension followed of course. His Godhead carried back to its own high and holy seat the veil of flesh, under which He had been pleased for a time to shroud its glories<sup>a</sup>."

A human body is prevented by its gravity from rising into the air; but the universal principle of attraction which pervades all matter was either now suspended, or had ceased to affect that of the Saviour, which might as He ascended undergo its change, and put on immortality, becoming *spiritual* and *glorious*, such as by His Almighty energy He shall render, in due time, the *natural* and *vile bodies* of all who shall hereafter, in answer to His prayer, be with Him *where He is, and behold and share His glory*.

The Apostles gazed intently and *stedfastly* upon their ascending Lord, *passing into the heavens*, till a cloud received *Him out of their sight*, when two angels, standing by them *in white apparel*, assured them, that as they had seen *this same Jesus taken up* from them, so He should in like manner visibly descend, to be seen, not as then, by a select few, but by the whole human race, who, beside the comparatively few whom the Lord shall find at His coming, shall be raised from the grave. He will then *Himself descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God, to be glorified by His saints*, that is, His Angels, and *admired by all that believe*. The eleven worshipped *Him* as their God, (for though the word be equivocal, there can be no doubt, after all that had passed, that it is here used in the sense of adoration,) and then *returned to Jerusalem*, not in sorrow on account of this separation, but *in great joy, and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God*; for all their doubts had vanished, their prejudices had been

<sup>a</sup> Jacobson's Sermons, 2d. edit. p. 89—94.

subdued, and they were at length satisfied that it was far better for them that Jesus should be their Intercessor and Sovereign in heaven, than their Companion and Teacher, or even King upon earth. We have no reason to suppose that they ever saw Him any more, till they themselves were removed in due time from this state of trial, except John, to whom He showed Himself at Patmos, as the Priest of His Church; and no subsequent appearances of our Redeemer are on record, except that to the first Martyr Stephen, and those to the Apostle of the Gentiles. He had previously told them, that it *was expedient for them that He should go away; for if He went not away, the Holy Spirit*, with His precious gifts, would not be sent to them; and while the Holy Spirit was to be their Advocate upon earth, He was Himself to be their Advocate in heaven; for thus only could He complete His offices, as their Prophet, King, and Priest. On His ascension He was *made*, in His human nature, *Head over all things*, for the government of His people, having obtained *gifts* for them, *for the building up of His Church*. On earth He had expiated our sins, by His sacrifice of Himself; but the intercessory part of the Priest's office could only be performed in heaven. As that Functionary under the law brought the blood of the sin-offering into the *Holy of holies*, so it was necessary that He, the substance of that shadow, should enter into His Father's presence, *the true tabernacle*, of which the *earthly* one was but a type, there to plead the efficacy of His merits for His people.

Thus terminates the history of our Incarnate Saviour upon earth, and the arrangement of it in one continuous narrative, exhibits in His discourses and actions an unity of design, which might not strike so forcibly an ordinary reader of the four Gospels. His human character, as it results from the



account of His inspired biographers, (for they have not formally drawn it,) is peculiar to Himself, as He alone, whether considered as a man or as a teacher, *did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*. His whole life was *holy, harmless, undefiled*, but He was not only negatively good, as might be supposed of one who had no taint of original sin, but preeminent in positive virtue, He was perfect in conversation and in action; for His countrymen exclaimed in admiration, *Never man spake as this Man*, and, *He has done all things well*; and *His example* is justly held forth to us, that *we should follow in His steps*. The more we study this example, the more perfect will it appear, but study it requires; for strange as the remark may seem, perfect virtue, from its very excellence, being less easy to be understood, till it is closely studied, will not produce so deep an impression as when alloyed; for men are apt to applaud the splendid excess rather than the accurate mean. In<sup>b</sup> the history of the illustrious we can in general readily trace their preeminent qualities. But in the character of Christ, though a character positively great, as well as unexceptionably pure, no quality predominates. The virtues are all so harmoniously blended, that as the prismatic rays, till broken by art, cannot be detected in the pure light formed by their union, so in His character, the whole of the colouring disappears; the virtues are simply and uniformly luminous.

Never to have committed the least fault, and never to have uttered a word that could be justly condemned, and that during a life passed in action, and exposed to continual temptation, evinces a perfection beyond the reach of man. The evidence of this being undeniable, Jesus

<sup>b</sup> These observations are taken from the fifth Discourse of Penrose's Bampton Lectures for 1808, entitled, "An Attempt to prove the Truth of Christianity from the Wisdom displayed in its Original Establishment;" in which Christ's wisdom is contrasted with the craft of the founders of false religions, and of the unworthy propagators of the true.

Himself appealed to it before all the people in the Temple, (John viii. 46.) *Which of you convicteth Me of sin? and if [in making this affirmation] I speak the truth, why do ye not believe Me?* Such a character being above the nature of men, could not have been invented by one; and even Rousseau, in his *Emile*, declares it to be inimitable, and that the inventor of it would be more astonishing than the hero. How unaccountable, that conceding so much, he does not concede all! He suspends his belief! though, on his own showing, the conclusion follows, that the Gospel narrative must be an accurate transcript from a true original, and that Jesus of Nazareth must have actually lived, and spoken, and acted as He is described to have done. His character, superior to that of the ideal sage of the Stoics, and the just man of the Platonists, has been admired even by those who reject His authority, and has extorted from the same infidel, in an eloquent parallel, the memorable though inconsistent confession, that if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God. A distinguished writer of our own days observes, that “His character was made up of contrasts; in other words, that it was an union of excellences not easily reconciled, at first sight incongruous, yet which, when duly proportioned, constitute moral harmony, and attract with equal power, love, and veneration.” “We discover,” says the late Dr. Channing, “in Jesus Christ an unparalleled dignity of character, a consciousness of greatness not discovered in any other individual; and yet this was blended with a condescension, lowliness, and unostentatious simplicity, which had never before been thought consistent with greatness. He united an utter Superiority to the world, to its pleasures and ordinary interests, with suavity of manners, and freedom from austerity. He joined strong feeling and self-possession; an indignant sensibility

to sin, and compassion to the sinner; an entire devotion to His work, and calmness under opposition and ill success; an universal philanthropy, and a susceptibility of private attachments; the authority which became the Saviour of the world, and the tenderness and the gratitude of a Son. The most striking trait was undoubtedly Benevolence; and although this virtue had existed before, yet it had never been exhibited in the same form and extent. This Benevolence was distinguished, first, by its love to man as man, a love comprehending, in its expansiveness, the hated Samaritan, and the despised Publican. Another characteristic of it was, its gentleness and tenderness, forming a strong contrast with the hardness and ferocity of the spirit and manners which then prevailed, and with that sternness and inflexibility, which the purest philosophy of Greece and Rome inculcated as the perfection of virtue. But its most distinguishing trait was its superiority to injury. This form of benevolence, the most disinterested and divine, was manifested by Him in infinite strength amidst injuries and indignities which could not be surpassed. While all other men are formed in a measure by the spirit of their age, we can discover in Jesus no impression of the period in which He lived. His history shows Him to us as a solitary being, living for purposes which none but Himself comprehended, and enjoying not so much as the sympathy of a single mind. Now this superiority, to the degrading influences of the age under which all other men suffered, needs to be explained. Such was the Author of our religion. Does not His character bear the unambiguous marks of a *heavenly origin*?" Such is the question of Dr. Channing<sup>c</sup>. Surely we may say in reply to this advocate of the Saviour's simple humanity, that in the perfect human character thus portrayed, he unconsciously supplies the best refutation of

<sup>c</sup> On the Evidences of the Christian Religion.

his own *God-denying* Apostasy<sup>d</sup>; and at the same time excites our amazement, that one who believed the miracles and divine mission of Christ, could suppose that the character which he himself delineates, and which he maintains is *of heavenly origin*, could belong to one who in his estimation was *of the earth earthy*, a mere Man, instead of *the Lord from heaven*.

Even the Unitarian Christian, while he discards the peculiar doctrines which alone make Christianity *good tidings of great joy*, hath still an incalculable advantage over all who draw their rules of life from the imperfect conduct of fallible men, or the unauthoritative deductions of reason, because, in the *Author and Finisher of his faith*, he has both a perfect teacher, and a perfect example of morality. It is, however, to be lamented, beyond the reach of language to express, that any who bear the *holy name by which we are called* should rest in this inadequate conception of

<sup>d</sup> Such is the emphatic epithet with which Eusebius brands Unitarianism, which he designates in the same chapter (E. Hist. v. 28.) as a blasphemous false speaking. It requires but a very little acquaintance with Christian Antiquity to know that Priestley and his school could find no support to this their scheme, except from authors whom the early Church condemned as heretical. But I am induced to translate from this chapter a few sentences which briefly trace its origin, and notice its condemnation, by the orthodox of early times. "They might perhaps seem to say something credible, if first of all the Divine Scriptures did not oppose them; and there are certain writings older than Victor, (Bishop of Rome, A.D. 193.) which they wrote to the Gentiles in defence of the truth, and against the heresies then prevailing. I mean Justin, A.D. 167, Miltiades, Tatian, and Clemens, in all of which Christ is represented as God. Who is ignorant of the books of Irenæus, Melito, and the rest announcing Christ to be God and Man? How many psalms and odes, written by believers from the beginning, celebrate Christ the Word of God as God! How then are they not ashamed to spread a report false concerning Victor, knowing with certainty that Victor excommunicated Theodotus, the author and father of this *God denying* Apostasy! The following remarks of our earliest Ecclesiastical Historian reminds us of the writings of Belsham, and the "*Improved Version of the New Testament by a Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*:" "Without fear they corrupted the Divine Scriptures, and rejected the Canon of the ancient Faith; they search not what the Divine Scriptures say, but laboriously exercise themselves to find some figure of a syllogism for the establishment of their Atheism."

their obligations to Him, and while they profess to honour Him as their guide, should, though it be unconsciously, *deny the Lord who bought them*. May it please our heavenly Father for His sake to remove from the hearts of all such the veil which conceals His glory, that they may believe with the Catholic Church, in every country and in every age, that Jesus is “very God” as well as “very Man,” and is by His twofold nature as “one Christ” entitled and enabled to fulfil all the offices of a Saviour; which, unless He were *the only-begotten Son of God*, He could be only in name. Happy are those now, who not only acknowledge Him as their *Prophet*, but rely upon Him as *their Priest*, and study to obey Him as *their King*; and happier far shall they be hereafter, when permitted to *see Him as He is*, (1 John iii. 2.) *coming in like manner as His Apostles saw Him go into heaven*. All who have *received the truth in the love of it* are satisfied, that it is impossible to *stand in judgment with the just and holy and heart-searching God*; and such will thankfully rejoice, that Jesus, having offered Himself upon the cross a willing sacrifice to reconcile God to man and man to God, is now ever interceding in heaven, where He is set down upon His Father’s throne, which through His intercession has become *a throne of grace*. Upon that throne He now reigns over Angels as well as Men, and having been *obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross*, His Father gave Him to be *the Head over all things to the Church*, and not only to that His *body*, but to all its members who are *builded together in Him for an habitation of God*; for when *He ascended up on high*, He obtained for them individually as well as collectively, the gift of the Holy Spirit, to enlighten their understandings, and to purify their hearts. “<sup>a</sup>Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe Thy Only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to

<sup>a</sup> Collect for Ascension-day.

have ascended into the heavens; so we all may also in heart and mind thither ascend ;” for we renounced, when baptized into His religion, “ the pomps and vanity of the world,” and hope, *our life being hid with Christ in God*, that, *when Christ who is our life shall appear*, we may then *also appear with Him in glory !*

THE END.









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